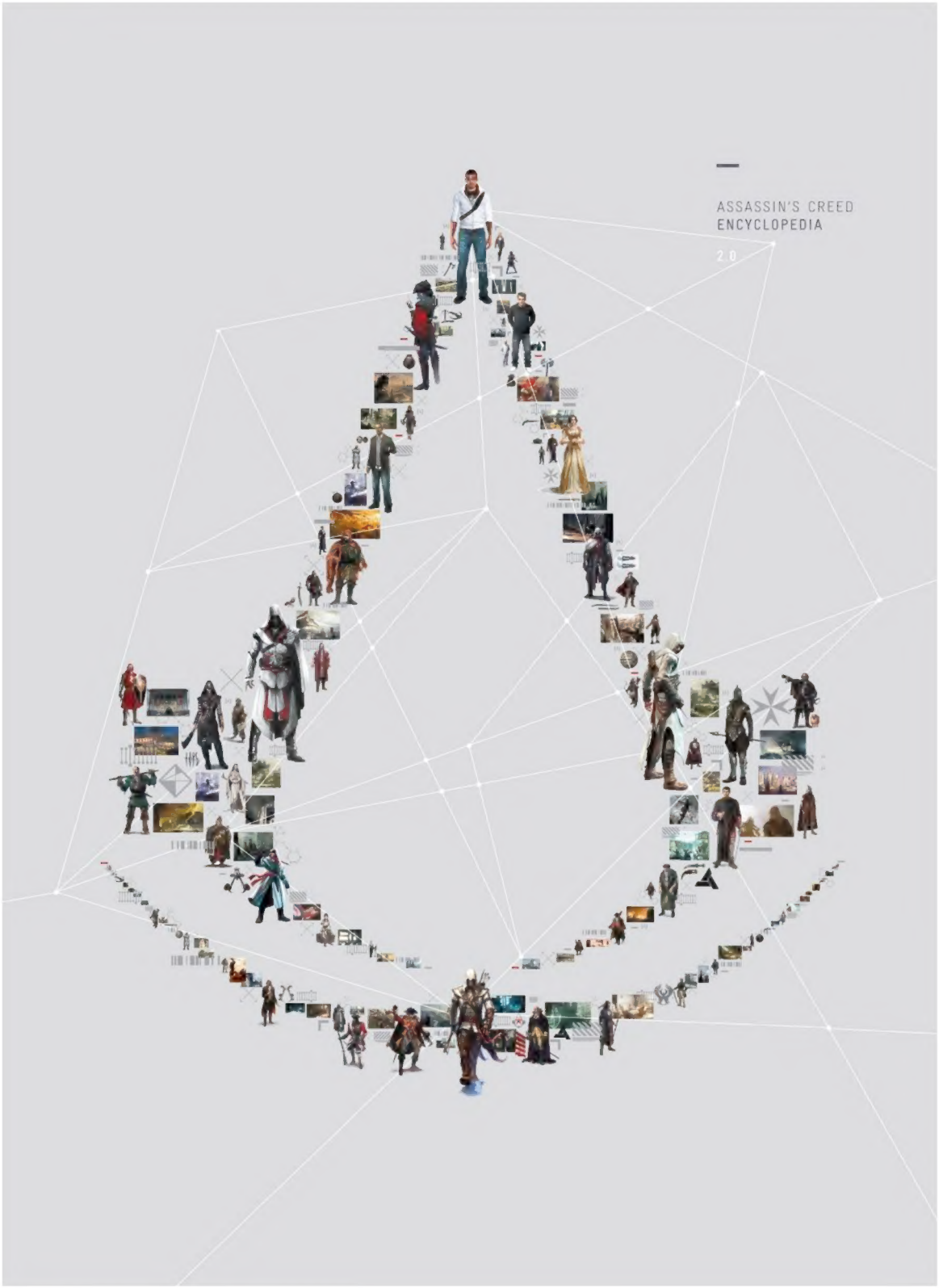

ASSASSIN'S CREED
ENCYCLOPEDIA
2 0

ASSASSIN'S CREED

ASSASSIN'S CREED ENCYCLOPEDIA

1

FACTIONS 10

1.A THE ASSASSIN BROTHERHOOD 12
1.A.1 The Brotherhood 12
1.A.1.a The Assassin Order 12
1.A.1.b History of the Organization 14
1.A.1.c The Three Tenets 21
1.A.1.d The Three Ironies 21
1.A.1.e Eagle Vision 22
1.A.1.f The Codex 23
1.A.2 Weapons & Gear 24
1.A.2.a The Hidden Blades 24
1.A.2.b Leonardo's Machines 29
1.A.2.c Weapons 32
1.A.2.d Armor 34

1.B THE TEMPLAR ORDER 36
1.B.1.a The Templars 36
1.B.1.b History of the Organization 37
1.B.2 The Abstergo Company 40
1.B.2.a Introduction 40
1.B.2.b History 42
1.B.2.c Projects: General 44
1.B.2.d Classified Memory Fragments 46
1.B.2.e Animi Avatars 50
1.B.3 The Animus 52
1.B.3.a Introduction 52
1.B.3.b History 53
1.B.3.c Animus: Genetic Memory 57
1.B.3.d Animus: Viewing 58
1.B.3.e Bleeding Effect 59

1.C FIRST CIVILIZATION 60
1.C.1 Introduction 60
1.C.2 History 61
1.C.3 Pieces of Eden 62
1.C.4 Apples of Eden 63

2

STORY 64

2.A THE MIDDLE AGES 66
The Third Crusade 67
Solomon's Temple 68
The Siege of Masyaf 68
Understanding the Creed 70
Return to Masyaf 73
Cyprus 73
Mongolia 74
Civil War 74
The End of Masyaf 75

2.B THE RENAISSANCE 80
Conspiracy 80
The Execution 83
Ezio's Revenge 84
Monteriggioni 84
San Gimignano 85
The Pazzi Conspiracy 88
The Venetian Conspiracy 89
Induction Into the Brotherhood 91
Battle of Forlì 92
Spain 93
Bonfire of the Vanities 94
The Vault 94
Fall of Monteriggioni 96
Rome 97
Borgia Arsenals 98
The Copernicus Conspiracy 98
Infiltration 99
Fall of Cesare Borgia 102
The Temple of Pythagoras 102
Viana 103
Altaïr's Library 103
Arrival in Constantinople 104
Sofia Sartor 105
Prince Suleiman 105
Saving Suleiman 107
Search for the Traitor 107
Cappadocia 108
Confronting Ahmet 108
The Apple's Message 110
Shao Jun 110

2.C THE RENAISSANCE: LEGACY 114
Defense of Monteriggioni 114
Battle of Agnadello 115
Assassination of Niccolò di Pitigliano 116

2.D THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION 119
Seven Years War 122
"No Taxation without Representation" 124
Ratonhnhaké:ton's Vision Quest 125
Boston Massacre 127
Boston Tea Party 127
Coercive Acts 129
Battles of Lexington and Concord 131
Battle of Bunker Hill 134
Declaration of Independence 134
Encampment at Valley Forge 135
Battle of Monmouth 137
Naval Battles 138
End of the War 142
Native Americans' Relocation 143

2.E SPANISH LOUISIANA 146
New Orleans Slave Society 146
Spanish Rule 146
Louisiana Rebellion of 1768 147
Expedition to Chichén Itzá 148
Return to New Orleans 148
Second Expedition to Chichén Itzá 149
The Company Man 150
Trip to New York 150
Familiar Faces 152

2.F IMPERIAL RUSSIA 156
The Fall 156

2.G RECENT HISTORY 159
The Great Purge 159
Desmond Miles 159
Abstergo Industries 159
The Glyphs–Escape from Abstergo 160
The Hideout–Minerva's Message 161
Monteriggioni 162
Colosseum Vault 163
Inside the First Civilization Temple 164
The Quest for the Power Source in Manhattan 165
Desmond Heads to Brazil 166
Desmond at Abstergo 167
End of the World Postponed 169

3 CHARACTERS 170

3.A DESMOND MILES 172
3.A.1 Friends & Allies 182
3.A.1.a William Miles 182
3.A.1.b Lucy Stillman 184
3.A.1.c Rebecca Crane 186
3.A.1.d Shaun Hastings 188
3.A.1.e Erudito 190
3.A.1.f Subject 16 191
3.A.2 Enemies 192
3.A.2.a Dr. Warren Vidic 192
3.A.2.b Alan Rikkin 192
3.A.2.c Anson Peake 193

3.B AQUILUS 194

3.C ALTAÏR IBN-LA'AHAD 196
3.C.1 Friends & Allies 205
3.C.1.a Al Mualim 205
3.C.1.b Maria Thorpe 206
3.C.1.c Malik Al-Sayf 208
3.C.1.d Abbas Sofian 209
3.C.2 Enemies 210
3.C.2.a Altaïr's Targets 210
3.C.2.b Robert de Sable 214
3.C.3 Others 215
3.C.3.a Saladin 215
3.C.3.b Richard I of England 216

3.D EZIO AUDITORE 218
3.D.1 Friends & Allies 231
3.D.1.a Giovanni Auditore 231
3.D.1.b Maria Auditore 231
3.D.1.c Claudia Auditore 232
3.D.1.d Federico & Petruccio Auditore 232
3.D.1.e Mario Auditore 233
3.D.1.f Domenico Auditore 234
3.D.1.g Sofia Sartor 234
3.D.1.h Leonardo da Vinci 236
3.D.1.i Caterina Sforza 240
3.D.1.j Niccolò Machiavelli 242
3.D.1.k Gilberto (La Volpe) 244
3.D.1.l Bartolomeo d'Alviano 246
3.D.1.m Paola 247
3.D.1.n Teodora Contanto 248
3.D.1.o Antonio de Magianis 248
3.D.1.p Cristina Vespucci 249
3.D.1.q Rosa 250
3.D.1.r Yusuf Tazim 250
3.D.1.s Prince Suleiman 251
3.D.1.t Piri Reis 252
3.D.1.u Shao Jun 253
3.D.2 The Borgias & Their Allies 254
3.D.2.a Rodrigo Borgia 254
3.D.2.b Cesare Borgia 256
3.D.2.c Lucrezia Borgia 259
3.D.2.d Giovanni Borgia 260
3.D.2.e Uberto Alberti 260
3.D.2.f Octavian de Valois 261
3.D.2.g Micheletto Corella 261
3.D.3 The Pazzi Conspiracy 262
3.D.3.a Pazzi Family 262
3.D.3.b Pazzi Conspirators 263
3.D.4 The Venetian Conspiracy 264
3.D.4.a Venetian Conspirators 264
3.D.5 The Constantinople Confrontation 268
3.D.5.a Prince Ahmet 268
3.D.5.b Prince Selim 269
3.D.5.c Manuel Palaiologos 270
3.D.5.d Shahkulu 271
3.D.6 Others 272
3.D.6.a Girolamo Savonarola 272
3.D.6.b Charles de la Motte 272
3.D.6.c Giuliano & Lorenzo de' Medici 272
3.D.6.d Ludovico & Checco Orsi 273
3.D.6.e Perotto Calderon 273

3.E CONNOR 274
3.E.1 Friends & Allies 284
3.E.1.a George Washington 284
3.E.1.b Achilles 287
3.E.1.c Founding Fathers 290
3.E.1.d Samuel Adams 291
3.E.1.e Kaniehtí:io 292
3.E.1.f Lafayette 294
3.E.1.g Benjamin Franklin 295
3.E.1.h Homestead Women 296
3.E.1.i Duncan Little 297
3.E.1.j Paul Revere 297
3.E.2 Enemies 298
3.E.2.a Haytham Kenway 298
3.E.2.b Charles Lee 301
3.E.2.c Benjamin Church 303
3.E.2.d Loyalists 304
3.E.2.e William Johnson 305
3.E.2.f Thomas Hickey 306
3.E.2.g John Pitcairn 306
3.E.2.h Nicholas Biddle 307
3.E.2.i Edward Braddock 307

3.F AVELINE DE GRANDPRÉ 308
3.F.1 Friends & Allies 312
3.F.1.a Agaté 312
3.F.1.b Jeanne 313
3.F.1.c Gérald Blanc 314
3.F.1.d Philippe Olivier de Grandpré 314
3.F.2 Enemies 315
3.F.2.a Madeleine de L'Isle 315
3.F.2.b Antonio de Ulloa 316
3.F.2.c Rafael Joaquín de Ferrer 316
3.F.2.d Baptiste 317

3.G DANIEL CROSS 318
3.G.1 Friends & Allies 322
3.G.1.a Hannah Mueller 322
3.G.1.b Paul Bellamy 322
3.G.1.c The Mentor 323

3.H NIKOLAI ORELOV 324
3.H.1 Friends & Family 327
3.H.1.a Anna Orelov 327
3.H.1.b Innokenti Orelov 327
3.H.1.c Nikola Tesla 327
3.H.2 Enemies 328
3.H.2.a Tsar Alexander III 328
3.H.2.b Tsar Nicholas II 328
3.H.2.c Grigori Rasputin 329

4 PLACES 330

4.1 Masyaf 332
4.2 Jerusalem 333
4.3 Damascus 334
4.4 Acre 337
4.5 Florence 338
4.6 Rome 340
4.7 Monteriggioni 343
4.8 Venice 345
4.9 Constantinople 349
4.10 Cappadocia 352
4.11 Boston 355
4.12 The American Frontier 358
4.13 New York 361
4.14 Philadelphia 363
4.15 New Orleans 366
4.16 Chichén Itzá 367

FOREWORD by Cliff Bleszinski 6
CARTES BLANCHES 370
CREDITS 382

Several years ago in the video game industry the big buzz word was "Transmedia". It was a term that was coined for original worlds and properties that spanned multiple venues, from the game to the TV series to the movies to the books. Everyone was aflutter with this idea; these mega properties were going to dominate the entertainment landscape and change how we consume media.

Flash forward to now and it's clear that very few studios were ever able to pull off this "holy grail" of world development. Budgets skyrocketed and very few wanted to take a gamble on building a new world. Ubisoft, however, pulled this off with Assassin's Creed, and they did it with flying colors.

Let's face it - we live in a digital and connected world. A distracted world. There are always multiple things vying for our attention, be it social media or mobile devices. In this era creatives need to craft games and worlds that gamers "marry" not ones that they casually "date". There are numerous ways to accomplish this, but one of the best ways to do it is to make a game world that is so extraordinarily deep that it takes an army to sort through all of the facts and details. The world of Assassin's Creed is one that is easy to get into but can take years to fully understand and appreciate.

And this encyclopedia is the start of that education. Enjoy!

Cliff Bleszinski
Design Director, Epic Games

Epic Games Design Director Cliff Bleszinski, a 19-year veteran of the computer and video game industry, shipped his first commercial title, "Jazz Jackrabbit", before graduating high school. During his tenure at Epic, Cliff has been a key visionary behind the award-winning, multimillion-selling "Unreal" game series in addition to the blockbuster "Gears of War" game franchise, which has eclipsed 13 million copies sold worldwide and crossed over into novels, comics, film, action figures and merchandise. Cliff continues to lend his creative expertise to Epic's game projects, such as "Gears of War 3", ChAIR Entertainment's "Infinity Blade", and People Can Fly's "Bulletstorm", and the scope of his work crosses over into other entertainment sectors as well.

> "EZIO" BY CRAIG MULLINS

> CHARGING THROUGH THE FRONTIER

[E2212]

[D1G09]

[2107A]

[B1107]

FACTIONS

PART # 1

THE ASSASSIN BROTHERHOOD: THE BROTHERHOOD

A modern day order with an origin reaching back to the very dawn of time, the Assassins are a worldwide secret organization dedicated to preserving mankind's right to freedom of choice. Their ideology is founded in the belief that only free will can ensure the betterment of humanity as a whole through the development of the individual, thus allowing for the birth of new ideas and innovations. Though it is acknowledged by the Order that free will comes with a price and potentially dangerous consequences, the risks involved are considered to be minor compared to the threat of losing all free will.

1:A:1
#A

THE ASSASSIN ORDER

The Order does not expect perfection from humanity—after all, only through learning from mistakes can there be growth—but rather hopes to see it pursue the dream of one day reaching perfection through free self-expression and an open source attitude towards knowledge. It is this very ideology which set them in direct opposition to the Templars throughout their intertwined history, pitting them against a powerful mirror organization which believes that the best way for humanity to survive is to save it from itself through the sublimation of free will.

While the Templars usually insinuated themselves into high levels of society, obtaining key roles and high-ranking supporters, the Assassins instead relied on stealth and secrecy, though not without acquiring influential allies and members of their own. People such as Leonardo da Vinci, Catarina Sforza and Marco Polo to name but a few strongly supported the Order. Several influential historical figures also counted among the Order's active members, such as Marcus Junius Brutus, Gaius Cassius Longinus, Dante Alighieri and Niccolò Machiavelli.

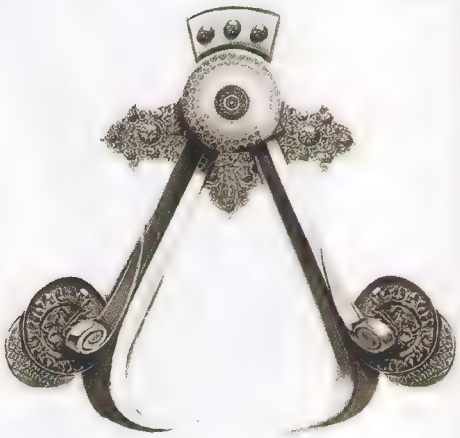
Despite working from the shadows, their reputation was oft known among the general populace of a given area. However, the ever-growing presence of the Templars among powerful corporations slowly but steadily drove the members of the Order to take refuge in remote compounds. This resulted in the Assassins keeping themselves out of the sight and ken of a world which gradually forgot about their existence.

Though they are not today that which they once were, the Assassins still work from the shadows and attempt to pursue their mandate, while evading the Templars' relentless pursuit.

→ ALTERNATE NAMES:
N BROTHERHOOD,

1:A:1
#B

HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZATION



The history of the Assassin Brotherhood is one of rebellion against tyranny and of the preservation of human freedom. The Assassins have existed since perhaps the dawn of humanity, waging a clandestine war against their ancient enemies: the Templars. Their penchant for adaptation and secrecy has allowed the Brotherhood to survive across the centuries. Though their methods and tactics have evolved over time, the Assassins remain dedicated to the ideology of free will.

EARLY ASSASSINS

From what we understand, the roots of the Brotherhood reach far into the past, from the Mediterranean to China. In 465 BCE, the Persian Assassin Darius killed the Achaemenid king Xerxes I. Xerxes was the first recorded victim of the Brotherhood's signature weapon: the hidden blade. A century and a half later, the Brotherhood claimed the life of another king when Iltani, a Babylonian agent, poisoned Alexander the Great. In 210 BCE, Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of the Qin dynasty, died by the spear of the Chinese Assassin Wei Yu.

Records of the Brotherhood during the ancient era are few. However, among the best documented historical events attributed to the Brotherhood during this period was the assassination of Julius Caesar. Marcus Junius Brutus, a conspirator and Assassin, left behind a record of his activities leading up to the assassination. The record, known as the Scrolls of Romulus, provides insight into the motivations and organization of the Assassin Brotherhood in ancient Rome.

According to the Scrolls, Caesar's imperialist tendencies and blatant disregard for the Senate had made him an enemy of the Brotherhood. In 44 BCE, Brutus and thirty-nine others surrounded and killed Caesar in the senate chambers in order to preserve the freedom of Rome. Another member of the Roman Brotherhood, the Assassin Leonius, killed Emperor Caligula in 41 CE.

RISE AND FALL OF MASYAF

The Assassins first emerged as an organized and visible faction in the medieval era. By the Third Cru-

sade, the Brotherhood, under the leadership of Al Mualim, had achieved prominence and notoriety across the Levant. Their main base of operations was in the walled city of Masyaf. The city thus became the cornerstone of the Assassin network; here Assassins were raised, trained and instructed in the tenets of the Order.

By the end of the 12th century, the Assassins had at their disposal an intricate network of informants in several cities across the Levant, including Jerusalem, Acre and Damascus. However, it was in 1191, during the siege of Masyaf, that the Assassins displayed their military prowess by repelling the forces of Templar Grand Master Robert de Sable.

Despite its considerable resources, the Brotherhood remained ostensibly apolitical, conducting assassinations against targets deemed threatening to the freedom of the people. In order to preserve peace, their operations were indiscriminate of political allegiances, and Assassins took the lives of Saracens and Christians alike.

The ascension of Masyaf in the political landscape was short lived, however. Soon after the Brotherhood's victory over the forces of Robert de Sable, it was discovered that Al Mualim was a Templar agent who manipulated the Assassins of Masyaf for his own gains. His treachery dealt a blow to the Brotherhood: the remaining Assassins, having eliminated their former master, now found themselves with fewer numbers, less resources and no one to lead them.

Eventually, the mantle of leader passed to Al Mualim's student, Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad, who brought a period of self-reflection and reform to the Brotherhood.

› DARIUS

› ILTANI

› WEI YU

◆ ALTAÏR'S REFORMS AND THE MONGOL THREAT

Shortly after the death of Al Mualim, the Assassins temporarily expanded their influence to the island of Cyprus by eliminating the authority of the new Templar Grand Master, Armand Bouchart, and forcing his troops to retreat.

At the end of the 12th century, as the Templars began to recede into the shadows, so too did the Brotherhood. Necessity led to adaptation, and the Assassins abandoned their fortresses. Assassin rituals established under Al Mualim—a prohibition against the use of poison and the removal of the ring finger—became obsolete.

Toward the end of Altaïr's life, the Brotherhood mobilized against the Mongol warlord Genghis Khan, ultimately slaying him in 1227 when Qulan Gal, a Mongolian Assassin, shot him from horseback. Qulan Gal's actions instigated a bitter reprisal from the Mongolians. In 1256, Hülegü Khan, Genghis Khan's grandson, marched against the Brotherhood, destroying most of their strongholds in the Levant.

◆ ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

By the 15th century, the center of Assassin activity had shifted from the Levant to Italy. The Renaissance was beginning in Florence, and the tumult of the era provided a backdrop for renewed conflict between Templars and Assassins. The Templars, under the leadership of Rodrigo Borgia, attempted to seize control of the Italian city-states. The Assassins opposed Borgia from their stronghold in Monteriggioni until 1500, when Rodrigo's son, Cesare Borgia, laid waste to the citadel, forcing the Assassins to regroup in Rome.

The Assassins were routed but not defeated. As in Masyaf, the Assassins of Rome adapted to their new circumstances and embraced new tactics. They established a hideout on Tiber Island and began a campaign of reclamation. In Rome, Assassin methodology began to evolve, and they attempted to win the support of the people, liberating Rome district by district. In this way, the Assassins drew strength from the city itself: sponsoring merchants, funding renovations and recruiting new members for their Order in the streets of Rome.

With the death of Cesare Borgia in 1507, the Assassins had simultaneously dissolved Templar influence from Rome and renewed their own ranks. The turn of the 16th century marked a renaissance for the Brotherhood, a revival of their numbers and resources, but also a change in their tactics.

> LEONIUS

> OULAN GAL

◆ [illegible]-CAN REVOLUTION

The Assassins recognized the importance of the Americas long before the Templars, and in the early sixteenth century, they sent men to establish the Brotherhood and secure peace.

As the Assassins traded and shared ideas with the indigenous populations, they discovered the Native's close link to the First Civilization. In particular, one village of the *Kanien'kehá:ka* tribe held a mysterious structure in very high regard in their religious iconography. The Assassins slowly gained the village's trust and the residents eventually allowed their new allies access to their sacred structure.

The Assassins were shocked to find an ancient temple built by the First Civilization. Unclear as to its purpose but certain of its importance the Assassins devoted themselves to the mysterious group, vowing to protect their people, culture and territory at all costs.

In the mid-eighteenth century, the Templars arrived in North America and radically altered the balance of power. In the aftermath of the Seven Years War (1756 – 1763), also known as the "French and Indian War", the Assassin's ranks were decimated. With its leaders dead, the only known Assassin who survived went into hiding, avoiding any outside contact, for fear of encountering the increasingly powerful Templars.

However, a young, persistent, half-native man named Ratonhnhaké:ton – later renamed Connor – resurrected the Brotherhood. Connor's involvement in the American Revolution directly challenged the Templar's supremacy in North America.

The Assassins were able to regain power in the continent following the deaths of Templar leaders Haytham Kenway and Charles Lee. The end of the eighteenth century then marked a revival of the Assassin Brotherhood.

◆ 20TH CENTURY AND BEYOND

As the twentieth century approached, the Assassins embraced the idea of change through social reform, and by the end of the 20th century the Brotherhood would place greater emphasis on social and political movements rather than brute force.

The transition, however, was tenuous. In Russia, the Brotherhood became associated with a movement known as *Narodnaya Volya*, or "The People's Will". This organization emerged during the late 19th century with the intention of overthrowing the Tzarist autocracy. Its members were branded terrorists

for acts of violence committed against the royal family. The Assassins of the *Narodnaya Volya* killed Tzar Alexander II in 1881, and made an attempt on the life of his successor, Alexander III, in 1888.

The Brotherhood was also closely involved in the social upheaval in Europe during the 20th century, participating in the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and eliminating Adolf Hitler at the close of the Second World War.

After the Second World War, the Assassins began a gradual transition toward inspiring change by example. As the political milieu of the world began to shift from imperialism to globalization, the Brotherhood once again adapted. The war between the Assassins and Templars, once waged in open conflict, was now conducted through the ballot box or the newspapers.

The Brotherhood's adherence to nonviolent social change did not save it from Templar reprisal. In November of 2000, a Templar sleeper agent named Daniel Cross infiltrated the Brotherhood's headquarters in Dubai and killed the Mentor—the highest ranking member of the organization. Cross also learned the location of Assassin training camps around the world.

November 2000 therefore marked the beginning of the end of the Assassin Brotherhood and, over the next twelve years, the Templars hunted the scattered Assassins. The fate of the Brotherhood remains uncertain; their ranks, resources and options grow increasingly limited. Nonetheless, they remain determined opponents to the Templar Order.

1 : A : 1 :
#C

THE THREE TENETS

The Three Tenets govern the rules of behavior for all members of the Assassin Brotherhood. The Tenets were incorporated into the training of Assassins, and have endured to the modern day. The Three Tenets are as follows:

I. STAY YOUR BLADE FROM THE FLESH OF THE INNOCENT.

II. HIDE IN PLAIN SIGHT.

III. NEVER COMPROMISE THE BROTHERHOOD.

If the Creed is the heart of Assassin ideology, then the Three Tenets form the bedrock of Assassin protocol. The First Tenet maintains the honor of the Brotherhood: an Assassin must show restraint, and take lives only when necessary. The Second Tenet provides strength to the Brotherhood: an Assassin must show subtlety, concealing oneself by becoming a part of the crowd. The Third Tenet ensures the survival of the Brotherhood: an Assassin must show integrity and act in a manner that never brings harm to the Brotherhood.

The First and Second Tenets provide the Brotherhood with a means of separating themselves from their enemies, the Templars. Where the Templars ostensibly strive for order and peace by controlling the masses, the Assassins respect the strength of the people—the strength of numbers. The Brotherhood operates among the people and through the people. This relationship is symbiotic. The people, often unknowingly, provide the Assassins with the means of concealing themselves from the Templars; the Assassins, in return, respect the lives of the innocent.

A rigid adherence to the Tenets contributed to the longevity of the Brotherhood and Assassins who violated these rules faced swift and severe consequences. To that end, the Third Tenet is considered the most important of the three. Devotion to the Brotherhood comes before personal loyalties.

1 : A : 1
#D

THE THREE IRONIES

In their effort to promote free will and intellectual advancement, the Assassin Brotherhood employs tactics and methods that seem contrary to their goals. The Three Ironies are observations into the contradictory nature of the Assassin Brotherhood. The term was first coined by Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad, leader of the Brotherhood during and following the Third Crusade, in a series of writings known as the Codex:

I. THE ASSASSINS SEEK TO PROMOTE PEACE, BUT COMMIT MURDER.

II. THE ASSASSINS SEEK TO OPEN THE MINDS OF MEN, BUT REQUIRE OBEDIENCE TO RULES.

III. THE ASSASSINS SEEK TO REVEAL THE DANGER OF BLIND FAITH, YET PRACTICE IT THEMSELVES.

The Three Ironies are therefore a commentary on the Assassin's Creed, which maintains that 'nothing is true; everything is permitted'. Consequently, contradictions between the Brotherhood's ideology and their practices do not invalidate their cause, and are not necessarily seen as hypocritical. The Three Ironies illustrate the Brotherhood's willingness to embrace contradiction and paradox.

Furthermore, the Three Ironies are important points of contemplation and meditation for the Assassins. The Ironies introduce an element of ambivalence and uncertainty into Assassin ideology, and therefore help prevent zealotry or excessive pride.

In later years, the Brotherhood began to slowly mitigate the Three Ironies by adapting methods more compatible with their ideology. By the 21st century, the Brotherhood began to embrace change through non-violent means, such as actively encouraging education. In this way, the Three Ironies also represent challenges which the Brotherhood strives to overcome.

1 : A : 1
#E

EAGLE VISION

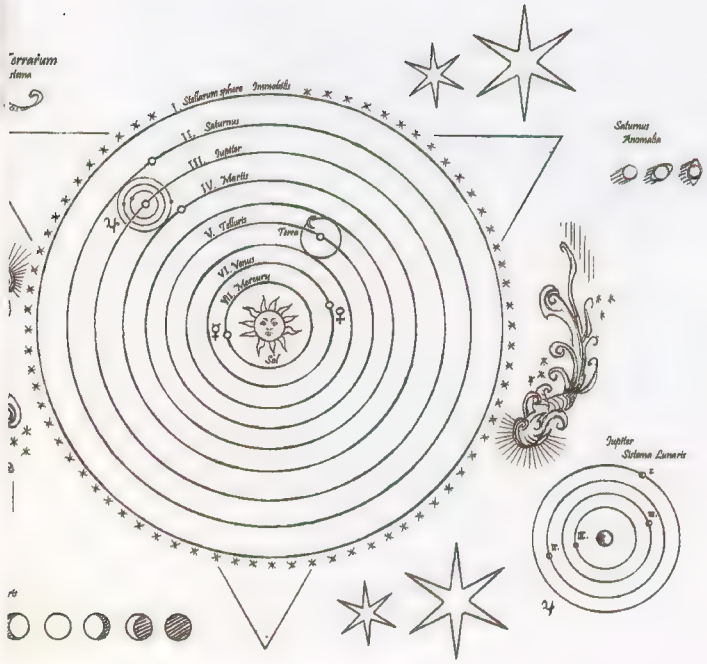
Eagle Vision is a term used to describe an extrasensory ability, which seems to be inherent in particular bloodlines. This genetic awakening grants its user an uncanny perception of his or her surroundings, the ability to instinctively read the intentions of people nearby, as well as the faculty to perceive images and information otherwise invisible to the human eye. Thus far, the only bloodlines containing documented instances of Eagle Vision are those of Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad and Ezio Auditore. Only certain of their descendants—such as Desmond Miles—are known to have displayed this particular ability.

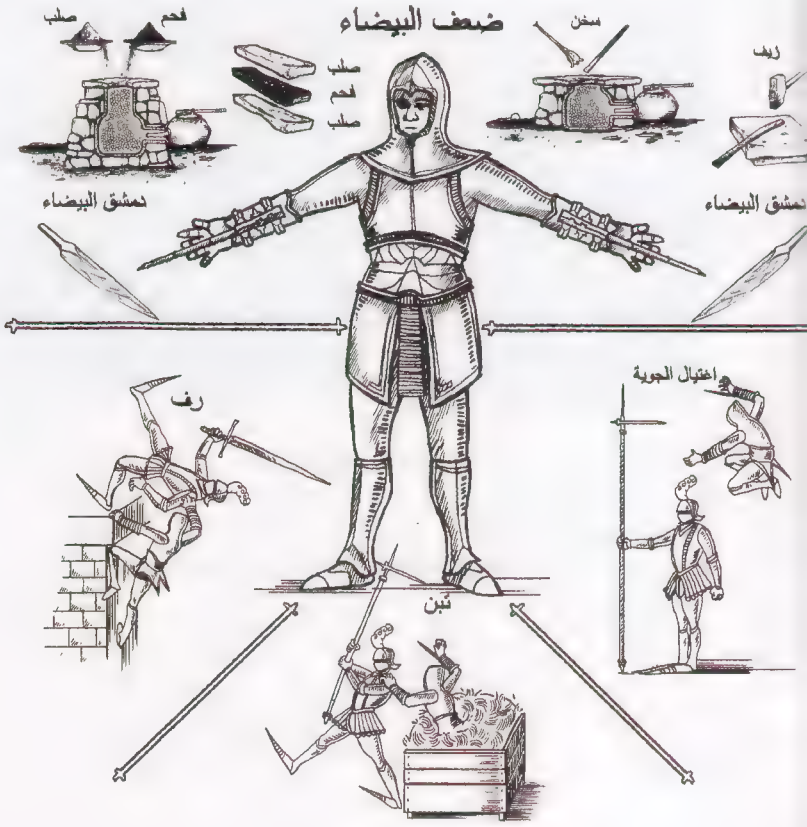
Eagle Vision is instinctive, though like any other sense it can be honed through practice. Initially, the ability manifests as a form of second sight, providing its user with an intuitive awareness of the world around him and enabling him or her to discern ally from enemy almost instantaneously. The ability extends to objects and the physical environment as well; someone with Eagle Vision can sometimes detect trace evidence outside the range of human vision, such as long faded footprints, fingerprints, and other traces of human and animal life. Additionally, Eagle Vision seems to increase in sensitivity with prolonged use and practice. A skilled user may develop this ability to detect a greater breadth of information, but also to focus perception to a single target or object, accurately predicting the target's movements.

The presence of Eagle Vision is often erratic; it may remain dormant for some time, or manifest at an early age. Desmond Miles, the contemporary heir of the bloodline, first experienced Eagle Vision following prolonged exposure to the Animus device, when reliving some of his ancestral memories triggered the latent ability.

The origin of Eagle Vision is not fully understood. However, research conducted by the individual known as Subject 16 suggests that it is a product of crossbreeding between early human beings and a race of ancient entities known only as Those Who Came Before. Although any of us has the potential to unlock Eagle Vision, it would seem that humans with strong connections to the members of the First Civilization have greater chances of acquiring it.

> CODEX





1 · A : 1

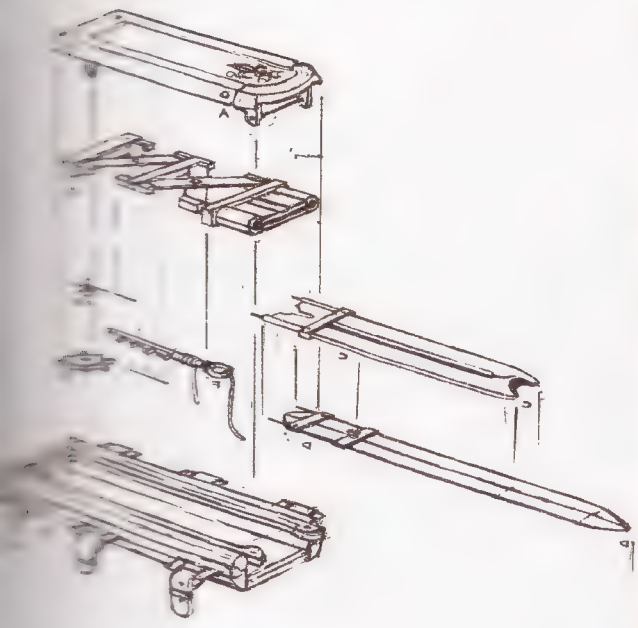
THE CODEX

Written by the Assassin Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad, the Codex is a collection of the author's observations, private thoughts and meditations. The Codex, begun by Altaïr during his travels to the Templar stronghold of Cyprus, sheds light on his life as the leader of the Brotherhood until his last days. Altaïr often grappled with the idea of right and wrong, the ancient feud between Templars and Assassins, the nuances of the Creed, and the hidden truths revealed to him by the Apple of Eden. The Codex brought to light a complex and personal portrait of its author, a man simultaneously dedicated to the Brotherhood's cause, yet troubled by the depth of his own knowledge and a growing fear of his inevitable death.

The Codex is both personal and technical; Altaïr included several diagrams and illustrations which detail advanced technological and scientific ideas revealed to him by the Apple of Eden. This includes a rudimentary model of a heliocentric solar system (an idea that predated Nicolaus Copernicus by several hundred years), illustrations on various Assassin techniques and blueprints for one of the earliest concealed firearms in the form of a modified hidden blade. Additionally, Altaïr had encoded a map of the world into the Codex, revealed only by exposure to the Apple of Eden. This information remained hidden from the Assassin Brotherhood until the Renaissance.

Following the disappearance of Altaïr from the pages of history, the Codex was in the possession of the Mongols, where it remained until the arrival of Marco Polo. Polo retrieved the Codex during his visit to the palace of Kublai Khan and brought it with him to Venice. In 1321, threatened by the reemergence of the Templars, Polo entrusted the Assassin Dante Alighieri with the Codex. The Templars, however, discovered Alighieri's plan to transport the Codex to Spain and murdered him. When the Codex fell into the hands of Alighieri's successor, Domenico Auditore, the Templars gave chase, and Domenico scattered the pages of the Codex across Otranto harbor in Southern Italy.

Over the years, the descendants of Domenico Auditore attempted to retrieve the Codex, with mixed results. The Codex and its whereabouts eluded the Brotherhood until 1499, when Ezio Auditore—with the aid of Leonardo da Vinci—succeeded in collecting and deciphering all thirty pages.



THE ASSASSIN BROTHERHOOD: WEAPONS AND GEAR

1 : A : 2
#A

THE HIDDEN BLADES

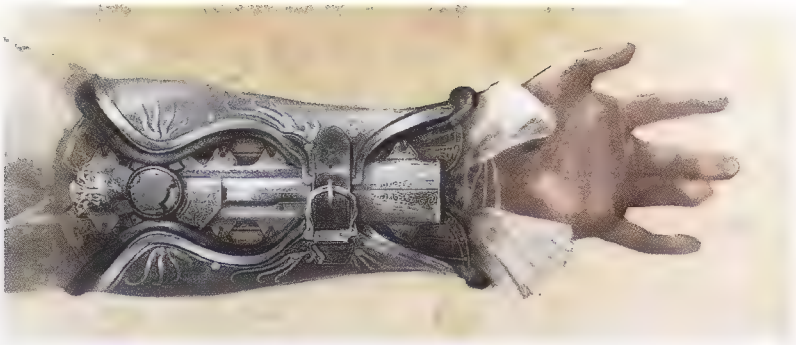
The Hidden Blade is a compact and deadly device which has become a defining mark of the Assassin Brotherhood. It is a three part folding blade designed to quickly extend or retract as the user wishes. The blade is usually housed in a bracer and hidden on the underside of the forearm, stretching across the palm and reaching well past finger length when extended. While the blade is retracted it is nigh undetectable, until the precise moment that its owner puts it to use, making it a silent and deadly weapon. Possessing one is the mark of a true Assassin.

EARLY BLADES
5TH CENTURY BCE - 12TH CENTURY CE

The first recorded use of a Hidden Blade was during the assassination of Xerxes I of Persia in 465 BCE, by an Assassin named Darius. The weapon used was composed of a simple mechanism that was worn on the right arm, and extended the Hidden Blade from under the sleeve. The advent of the Hidden Blade changed the Order's means of assassination, as Assassins had hitherto relied upon daggers, poison and even serpents to do their work.

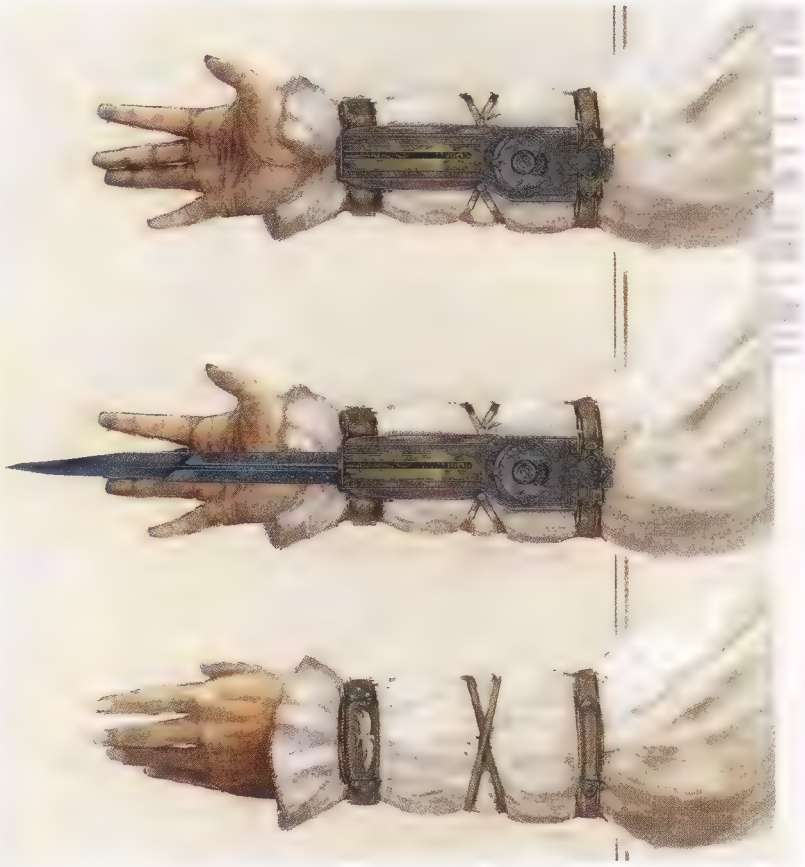
By the 12th century use of the Hidden Blade had taken on several ritualistic aspects, with the very mechanism of the weapon refined to reflect the importance of its use, as well. When Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad wielded his Hidden Blade during the Third Crusade, he did so in the traditional manner followed by all members of the Brotherhood. The blade sat on a spring-loaded mechanism operated by a ring cuff attached to the little finger. This cuff triggered a switch that allowed an Assassin to quickly extend or retract the blade with a simple flick of the wrist. The weapon rig was seated into a large leather bracer that covered most of the Assassin's forearm, and was usually worn on the user's left arm. Due to the size of the blade, and the fact that the leather bracer was not strong enough to defend against a larger weapon such as a sword, the Hidden Blade was not used as a melee weapon. However, particularly swift Assassins often used it as a counter measure against slower opponents and would deliver fatal blows to their enemies the instant an opening presented itself.

One of the most significant changes to the blade was the ritual that now accompanied its use. Upon gaining his Hidden Blade an Assassin would have the ring finger of his left hand amputated. The removal of the finger was as much a rite of passage for an Assassin as it was a sign of his commitment to the Brotherhood. However the loss of the finger also served a practical purpose: the weapon was designed to extend through the gap in the fist left by the missing finger, and thus replaced the digit with the blade itself. This made the blade an extension of the Assassin's body, and also ensured that it would not be wielded by those who were not wholly committed to its use.

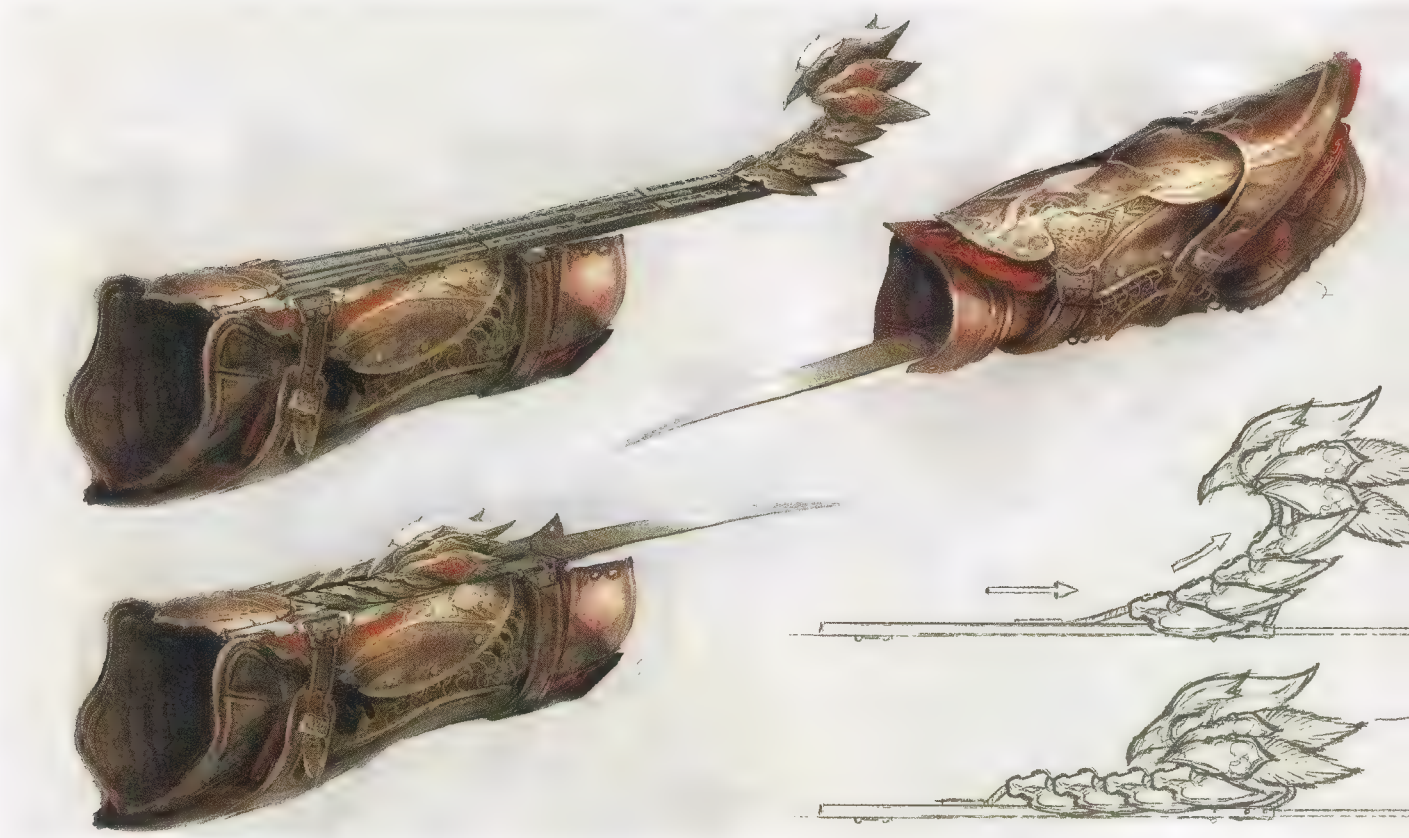


RENAISSANCE BLADES
15TH & 16TH CENTURY CE

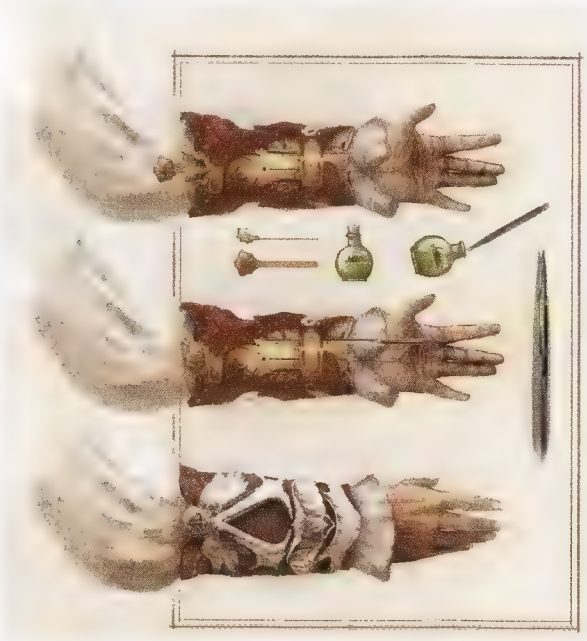
The Hidden Blade was eventually redesigned by Altaïr, who had become leader of the Brotherhood. His writings, found in the Codex, detailed his vision for future blades, and these weapons were eventually created and used by Assassins during the Italian Renaissance. Ezio Auditore inherited his father's Hidden Blade and had it repaired and modified by Leonardo da Vinci. These new weapons had been altered for greater stealth, and thus the ring cuff switch had been removed to make them less recognizable. Instead the mechanism was operated by a pressure switch inside the bracer, which could be depressed by flexing the wrist to extend or retract the blade. The loss of a finger was also no longer required, as Altaïr sought to prevent his agents from bearing such a defining mark. The new design allowed an Assassin to use the weapon with full effect while retaining the ring finger.



In the Codex, Altaïr outlined the means for creating these blades, and specified stronger metals to be used in their crafting. For this reason Renaissance blades were much stronger than their predecessors, and could be used as effective melee weapons. These blades were strong enough to clash with larger weapons and were even tough enough to puncture an opponent's armor. The blades also had a variety of applications beyond combat, and could be used to operate mechanisms and even pick locks. Metal plating on the bracers granted the wearer a stronger defense, and allowed for protection against such weapons as swords and maces. Blades, however, were only minor improvements that enhanced the blade's effectiveness.



> HOOK BLADE



> POISON BLADE

Altaïr's Codex outlined more radical design changes. The first of these was to pair the blade with a twin weapon to be worn on an Assassin's other arm. This addition made the Assassin capable of dealing death with both arms at once, though the use of two blades was restricted to all but the highest ranking Master Assassins. The off-hand blades worn by Ezio were often smaller and not as heavily armored as the primary weapon, but were every bit as lethal. To make the primary blade all the more deadly, Altaïr designed a means of hollowing the steel to turn it into a poison delivery system. The specifications for this upgrade were exacting, but once crafted it allowed Ezio to inject his targets with a deadly dose of toxin, allowing a stealthier, time-delayed kill.

One of Altaïr's most revolutionary concepts however was the addition of a projectile system to the Hidden Blade. Capitalizing on the advent of firearms, Altaïr designed a small pistol that could be attached to the blade's housing. The pistol was small enough to avoid detection, but boasted significant range and accuracy. Though it was noisy and drew attention, a single accurate shot from the pistol guaranteed the death of the target. This breakthrough led to other upgrades which utilized projectile combat to enhance the effectiveness of the Hidden Blade.

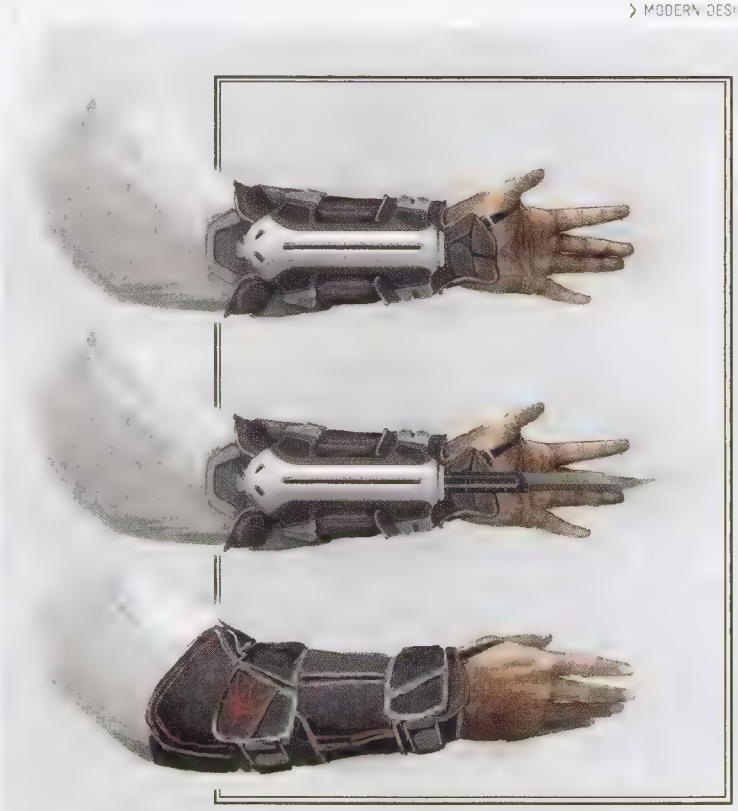
› HIDDEN PISTOL

While working for the Borgias in Rome, Leonardo da Vinci developed a dart launcher for Ezio's blade, allowing him to fire poisoned projectiles at his enemies. This dart launcher was quieter than the pistol and while the target's death was not instantaneous, the weapon itself was unerringly lethal. Leonardo also developed a weapon known as the "hidden bolt", a device that fired miniature crossbow bolts from a concealed launcher mounted on the Hidden Blade. Elsewhere, Turkish Assassins had designed the Hook Blade, which granted the weapon a wide range of uses—such as allowing its user to climb walls at a much faster rate—while remaining extremely efficient in any combat situation.

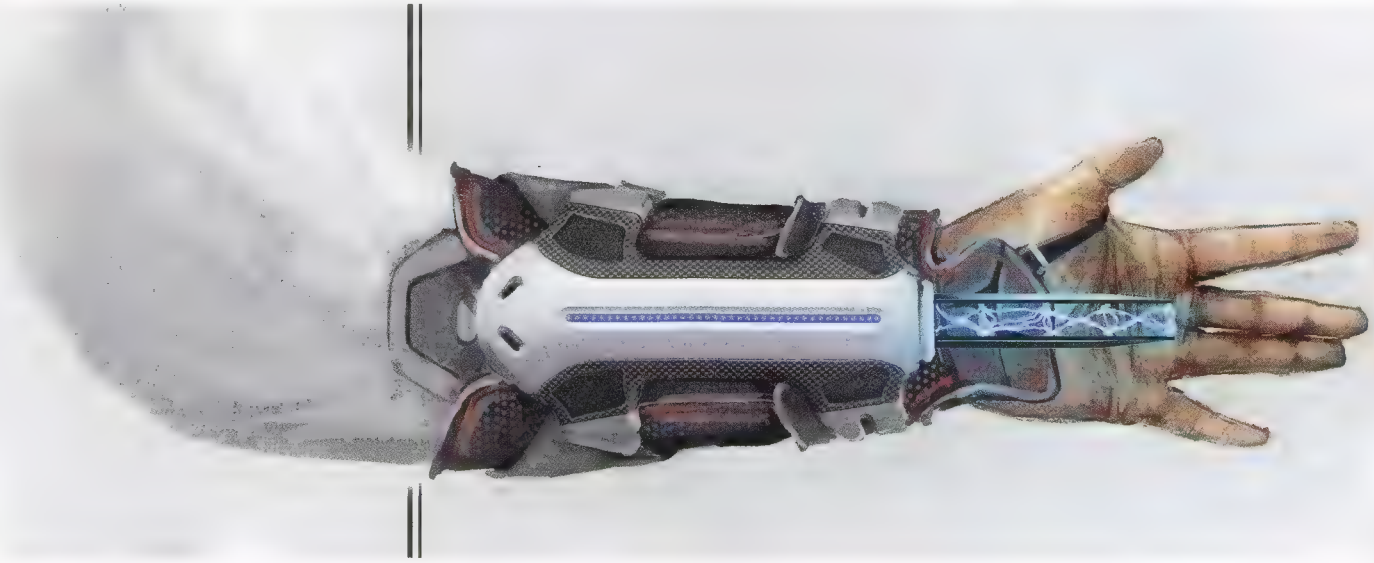
MODERN BLADES
20TH & 21ST CENTURY CE

In the late 20th century, several Assassins—such as Paul Bellamy, director of an Assassin training camp near Philadelphia—still wielded Hidden Blades. Daniel Cross, a Templar sleeper agent, used the Mentor's own ceremonial blade to kill him in 2000. Twelve years later, after reliving Ezio's memories, Desmond Miles also began to use a Hidden Blade. His first blade was an unmodified weapon similar to the one Ezio Auditore had initially used in his early missions. Desmond later used a simplified version of the weapon, which consisted only of the blade, its mechanism and a leather harness. This light blade was as versatile as Ezio's had been, and Desmond used it primarily to operate machines and pick locks. During his escape from the Assassin hideout, Desmond faced a contingent of Abstergo security guards. In the ensuing fight, he proved that, despite its age, the Hidden Blade remained an extremely deadly weapon when wielded by an expert user.

> MODERN DESIGN



> SHOCK BLADE



1 : A : 2
#B

LEONARDO'S MACHINES

THE FLYING MACHINE

Leonardo da Vinci had long been excited by the prospect of human flight. From an early age he had a great love of birds, and as his technical skills developed he sought to replicate their ability to fly, filling his notebooks with sketches of wing-like structures and the mechanisms for manipulating them. By 1480 he was well on the way to building a machine that would fulfill his dream: a fully-maneuverable glider built for a single passenger, heavily based on the biomechanical structure of a bird. However, his attempts to fully realize flight were interrupted by his move from Florence to Venice, but Leonardo brought the prototype he had been working on along with him.

Leonardo set aside his creation for several years, until he was approached by his friend Ezio Auditore in 1485. Ezio wanted to use the machine to infiltrate the Venetian Ducal Palace and rescue the Doge from a Templar assassination plot. Pleased to have found someone willing to test the contraption, Leonardo had Ezio jump off a high tower wearing the machine upon his back; Ezio managed a few seconds of flight before crashing unceremoniously into the ground. Leonardo was disheartened, but had a revelation upon observing a piece of paper floating in the fireplace; he realized the glider could use updrafts from hot air to stay aloft. Recruiting the Thieves Guild of Venice to build a series of bonfires lining the route to his destination, Ezio was able to use Leonardo's flying machine to soar over the palace's defenses, to the consternation of the confused guards beneath him. The machine, however, did not survive the trip.

The winged glider was not Leonardo's only design for a flying machine. He also sketched what appeared to be a rudimentary helicopter, demonstrating a surprisingly advanced understanding of the mechanics involved, though he lacked the materials to properly construct it and the project never got off the ground. He also invented the parachute, just in case his airborne experiments went wrong.

THE BOMBER

Fifteen years after the destruction of Leonardo's first flying machine, the inventor found himself hostage to Cesare Borgia and forced to design new flying machines, this time with much less peaceful purposes in mind. Leonardo's new "bombers" were outfitted with deadly cannons that fired explosive

shells, the updraft of which could be used to make the device fly without exterior aid. A factory for their production was set up near the Umbrian town of Valnerina, where Cesare hoped to produce enough of the machines to help him conquer Italy. Leonardo, appalled by Cesare's plans, leaked the location of the factory to Ezio, who then set out to destroy Leonardo's schematics and halt the production. Hijacking one of the completed bombers, Ezio used it to lay waste to Cesare's factory from the air before demolishing the machine itself.

THE MACHINE GUN

Another creation Leonardo was forced to make for Cesare was a machine gun, designed to be used from the back of a chariot. Firing rapid, successive, large-caliber shots from a single barrel without any need to reload, the weapon was said to be capable of cutting down a hundred men in minutes. The

schematics and prototypes were stored in Colli Albani, overlooking Lake Nemi. Ezio headed there, destroyed one of the chariots and then used the other to escape, mowing down his pursuers with the machine gun as he went.

Leonardo was also responsible for designing several kinds of firearms. He was one of the first to draw up a design for the wheel-lock, a massive improvement over previous matchlocks, which were cumbersome and almost impossible to fire in rain. Cesare would outfit his armies with these weapons, including the elite Papal Guard, and also carried one himself. Leonardo had various other designs for fast-firing weapons, including a somewhat unwieldy eight-barreled contraption that would have required two people to use. His notebooks also contain drawings of a special chariot with deadly scythed wheels; it is perhaps fortunate that he never got around to attaching these to the vehicles he had designed for Cesare.

THE NAVAL CANNON

The third machine Leonardo was forced to create was a special stabilized gondola, mounted with a cannon that could fire multiple flaming projectiles. It was stored in an underground facility on the Gulf of Naples, where Cesare's fleet of warships was moored. With the help of one of the engineers working on the project, Ezio infiltrated the complex and stole the gondola. Though designed to be used by two people, with one propelling the boat and another manning the cannon, Ezio successfully used the machine alone and demonstrated its destructive capabilities, sinking the Templar fleet as it lay at anchor. He then turned the craft's weapon upon itself and destroyed it.

Leonardo's notebooks contain a variety of other ocean-based machines, including a rudimentary submarine and a waterproof diving suit. He was also a noted hydraulic engineer, responsible for an ambitious scheme to divert the River Arno in order to help the Florentines capture the city of Pisa in 1504. Leonardo later drew up a plan to build an immense bridge across the Bosporus for the Ottoman Sultan.

THE TANK

Leonardo's final invention was the most deadly of all. The armored car possessed multiple cannons and a full 360 degree range of movement. It was also immune to all but the heaviest weapon fire. It relied on a series of man-powered cranks to move around (Leonardo considered using horsepower, but accurately divined that the beasts would be spooked by

> [illegible] CANNON

the noise inside the tank), and required a crew of three to use it at full effectiveness.

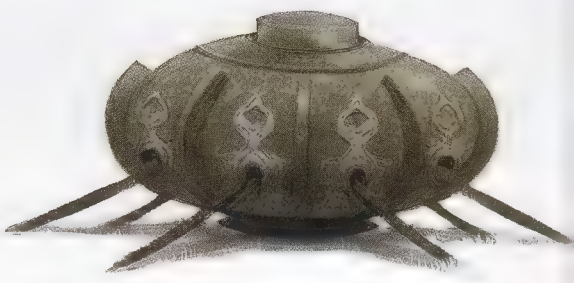
Leonardo understood the dangers of such a weapon and drew the design in such a way that, if built, the wheels would actually work against each other, preventing the machine to move. However, Cesare was able to work around this, and had a factory for their construction built at the foot of Monte Circeo. He planed to use the machines as the vanguard of his armies in a surprise attack upon Sicily.

The compound was heavily defended by soldiers and cannon emplacements, and by the time Ezio discovered its location and arrived there several tanks had already been constructed. With the help of two mercenaries he had rescued from Borgia captivity, Ezio seized one of the vehicles and used it to blow his way into the central factory compound, destroying the other tanks along the way. Though he felt some desire to keep the tank for himself, Ezio knew it had to be destroyed and blew it up with a heavy-duty cannon.

1 : A : 2
#C

WEAPONS

Various weapons used by factions from the medieval era to the Renaissance.



1 : A : 2
#D

ARMOR

Types of armor worn by Assassins during the Renaissance.

THE TEMPLAR ORDER: THE TEMPLARS

The Templar Order, also known as the Order of Knights Templar, is a secret organization with a millennia-long history. Although the group has undoubtedly been fragmented and has used various appellations over time, it is believed that the Order has existed since the dawn of humanity—or at least since humanity freed itself from its mysterious progenitor race, known only as Those Who Came Before. According to some, Assassins and Templars once shared the same ideals, the same dreams, the same hopes for humanity. That may be true, but if the Templars had a common purpose with the Assassins, these times are long gone. For as long as history can recall, the Assassin Brotherhood and Templar Order have been waging a secret war against each other, with each faction vying to realize their antithetical vision of a better future for humanity.

While the methods used may seem harsh, members of the Order firmly believe that they are working toward the betterment of humanity. Contrary, to the Assassins, who see themselves as the defenders of people's freedom, the Templars are convinced that it is through calculated manipulation of the masses that humanity will ultimately reach its full potential.

1:B:1
#B

HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZATION

While the origins of the Templar Order have long been forgotten, some speculate that one of its founding members was Cain, the mythical figure who killed his own brother, Abel. Further conjecture would posit that Cain actually murdered his brother not out of jealousy, but in order to acquire a Piece of Eden—one of the highly advanced technological devices left behind by Those Who Came Before. Whether Cain was a Templar, or whether he inspired or played an active role in the foundation of the Order, remains to be determined. However, evidence suggests that some Templars of olden days considered themselves the Children of Cain. Several even espoused the belief that their emblem, the red cross *pattée*, was the mark of Cain.

Despite its mysterious origins, the Templar Order has existed under one form or another for millennia. Unfortunately, little is known about the Order prior to the 5th century BCE, and information uncovered from this era is unreliable at best. Still, it is believed that the Templars were behind Darius the Great, fourth king of the Achaemenid Empire, when he overthrew the usurper and ascended to the throne of Persia. The Templars also aided his son and successor, Xerxes I, as he suppressed revolts in Egypt and Babylon, and conquered much of Greece following the Battle of Thermopylae. It is not known whether Darius or Xerxes were Templars themselves, or even if they were aware of the Order's existence and influence. Nevertheless, both rulers seem to have greatly benefited from Templar intervention.

The Templar Order also played a pivotal role in forging the Empire of Alexander the Great, which spread from the Ionian Sea to the Himalayas. Templars allegedly entrusted Alexander with a Staff of Eden, a powerful artifact of the First Civilization, which explains how he was able to become the most successful—and undefeated—conqueror in history by the age of thirty. In the following century, the Order assisted Qin Shi Huang, founder of the Qin Dynasty, who undertook several major projects—such as the Great Wall of China—proving that as early as the 3rd century BCE, the Templar Order was already spanning the known world.

In Western Europe, the Order was especially active during the Roman era. Like many other great rulers of Antiquity, it is unknown whether Gaius Julius Caesar was in collusion with them or even aware of the Templars' existence. Regardless of whether he was a member of the Order or not, Templars did evidently support Caesar when he was appointed dictator of what was soon to become the Roman Empire. Templar influence would also be felt during the reign of Emperor Caligula almost a century later, until his death in 41 CE.

From the 3rd century until its fall, Templars aimed to knit together the shreds of the Western Roman Empire, but ultimately failed as Alamanni, Ostrogoths, Huns and other barbarians conquered its territory. However, Templar influence undoubtedly continued to be felt in other parts of the world, notably in Constantinople and the Eastern Roman Empire—but again very little information on the Order's involvement during this era has thus far been brought to light.

Since its foundation, illustrious men and women—some would say visionaries—have taken the reigns of the Templar Order. Its most remarkable leaders have often been men of science, such as Sylvester II. Unfortunately, such men were often mistrusted and, in medieval Europe at least, branded heretics because of the vast knowledge they possessed. Some of these Templars suffered greatly; many were tortured and killed for believing in things such as medicine and chemistry, or the simple fact that the Earth was round. In the 12th century, Bernard de Clairvaux—possibly an influential Templar himself—realized that the Order needed the Church as an ally. One of the most respected figures in Christendom, he sent nine trusted men to the Holy Land to search the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. Upon their return, nine years later, Bernard reformed the Templar Order.

With Grand Master Hugues de Payens, Bernard created the *Latin Rule*, gained the support of the Church, and ensured that the Order would be recognized and confirmed during the Council of Troyes of 1129. For the first time in its long history, the Order of Knights Templar was made public. Yet, its agenda—the betterment of humanity through technical and scientific advancement—remained a closely guarded secret. Following the Council of Troyes, the Order flourished. For almost two hundred years, the Knights Templar played a critical role across Europe and the Levant. During this Golden Age, Templars were everywhere, influencing kings, popes, and men of science alike.

This Golden Age, however, ended abruptly. By the end of the 13th century, the Order had been greatly weakened by the Assassin Brotherhood and their allies. In addition, King Philip le Bel, unknowingly serving the cause of the Assassins, conspired against the Templars and ensured that the Church would condemn them as heretics. Jacques de Molay, the last publicly recognized Grand Master of the Order of Knights Templar, understood that the organization would not survive unless it was officially disbanded. Believing that the Order was more important than any one man was, he made the ultimate sacrifice and let himself be burned at the stake, not only to save the lives of his fellow Templars and their allies, but also to mislead his enemies into believing that the Order would die along with him.

Shortly before his death, however, Grand Master de Molay selected nine of his most trusted men and, armed with the knowledge of the Ancients, sent them out into the world. From that day forth, the Templars would continue to influence mankind from the shadows of history's most powerful figures. With their help, they would carry on their age-old quest, helping humanity reach its full potential through technical and scientific development.

Despite the noble ambitions of their forebears, the Templars of Europe fell into despondency during the Renaissance. Operating on the fringe of society, the Order's leaders— eventually led by Rodrigo Borgia—forgot their true purpose, blinded by greed and personal ambition. Templars refer to this period as the Dark Age of the Order. Still, in other parts of the world the Templars remained strong; in Asia, for instance, they aided Emperor Jiajing secure his hold upon China.

In spite of the mistakes of the European Renaissance, the Templars' search for understanding continued. Hidden behind society's political, religious, cultural and scientific leaders, many Templars strove to become pioneers of scientific research.

The Templars' influence continued to be felt throughout the Age of Enlightenment. With intellectuals such as Spinoza, Locke, Newton and Bacon, a new model for society eventually emerged; a society where science and technology could flourish unhindered. The Templars embraced those ideas—and no doubt helped develop most of them—and led the way to the Industrial Revolution. During this period, Templars continued to pull the strings, guiding and swaying entire dynasties—like the House of Romanov. Development was encouraged and nurtured, but always under the Templars' exacting supervision.

The Order also pursued opportunities to influence politics by creating turmoil. In the mid-eighteenth century, a major breakthrough led the Templar Order to explore the Americas. Templar possession of a Piece of Eden contributed to locate a potential precursor site of Those Who Came Before, on the east coast of British colonial America.

The arrival of the Templars in America rapidly changed the nature of rivalry between the Assassin and the Templars. Templar influence and power grew at an unprecedented scale during the Seven Years War in America (1756 - 1763). The Order crushed the Assassin's leadership and eradicated the Brotherhood's influence in the region.

The fragile political environment in British North America provided an opportunity for the Templars to take control of the territory and advance its searches for traces of Those Who Came Before. However, they quickly gave up the search for the precursor site to focus on building their Templar utopia.

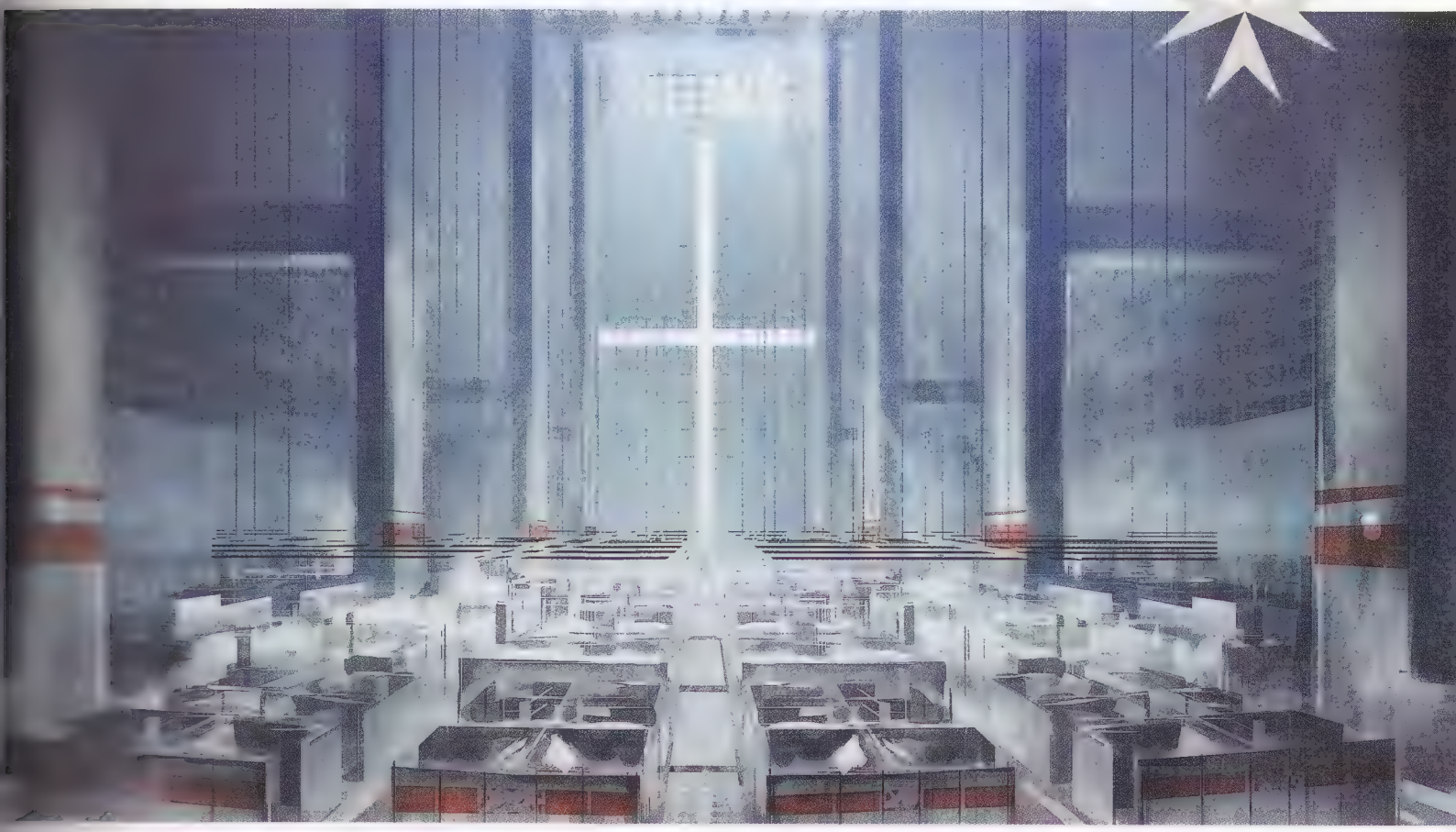
During the war, the Templars attempted to take advantage of the unstable environment to control the course of events. They were willing to eliminate anyone who would oppose their vision. Accordingly, the Templars were ready to eliminate some of the Founding Fathers who were not supporting their objectives.

Templar operations, however, did not occur according to plan. Assassin's operations and activities during the War for Independence decimated the Templar leadership in North America. The Templars were unable to take control of the Revolution and influence the portrait of the new American nation.

Many Templars saw the dawn of the 20th century as the beginning of a new era; a period where scientific progress would not only flourish, but also quite literally change the very fabric of society. In 1910, the Order's leaders designed the Plan. Twenty-seven years later, a group of influential Templar industrialists founded Abstergo Industries, a multinational corporation that would become the public face of the Order. For the second time in its millennia-old history, the Order was—at least in some small way—made public. The Templars, however, would not repeat the mistakes of the past. They determined that Abstergo would be used as a front, and take full advantage of the vast resources the company would provide, while the Templars continued to operate behind the scene, never revealing their identity or their real agenda.

As with any other organization with a long history, the Templar Order's goals and methods have evolved. The main concern of the true Templars has however always remained the same: the betterment of humanity. These men and women have always believed that they would reach this noble objective through scientific and technological progress. Since the discovery of the Pieces of Eden, ages ago, Templars have aimed to understand, use and control such wondrous artifacts; firstly to protect humankind from itself, and secondly to ensure a better future for all. Although some would say that they have often taken drastic measures to acquire Pieces of Eden or push scientific advancement, Templars trust that their methods are not only the right ones, but also the only tools that can ensure the fulfillment of their goal.

While on the surface the Templars share similar goals with their age-old enemies, the Assassins, their ideals and methods differ greatly. While the Assassins strongly believe in freewill, Templars hold to the notion that humanity must be guided. The leaders of the Templar Order took it upon themselves to do just that—which, in their minds, is more important than the antiquated notion of freewill.



THE TEMPLAR ORDER: ABSTERGO INDUSTRIES

The 20th century marked a new era for the Templars. The leaders of the Order firmly believed that science and technology, which had greatly prospered during the Industrial Revolution, would continue to develop at a rate such as the world had never before seen—provided they kept pushing onward. This progress would give them the chance to strengthen their hold upon the world's populace, allowing them to guide mankind towards a better future. In 1910, the Templar leaders, a group of visionary industrialists, devised the Plan. Twenty-seven years later they founded Abstergo Industries, a multinational corporation, which was to become the public face of the Templar Order.

As of 2012, Abstergo Industries is one of the largest multinational conglomerates in the world. However, not everyone working at Abstergo is a Templar. In fact, Abstergo Industries functions as any other corporation, with only a small group among their employees having been inducted into the Order. In secret, these individuals continue the Templars' age-old search for knowledge and understanding, using state of the art scientific methods and equipment from the corporation's almost limitless resources.

1 : B : 2
#B

HISTORY

In 1910, the leadership of the Templar Order met to devise what came to be simply known as the Plan, a stratagem that would ensure that their vision of capitalism would not only see the light of day, but would literally become the basis of modern society. Among them were Henry Ford and Ranny Olds, who gave the world the assembly line, a device the Templars have used to control both capitalists and workers alike. The Templars' vision of capitalism—put in place by the Plan—led to the creation of the Federal Reserve System in 1913.

The capitalist principles led the Order to devise a strong anti-communist platform. The Plan divisions extended relatively quickly and were able to promote Templar interests within different branches of authority. The Templar influence reached as high up as the United States Federal Government. The Order and the Government collaborated to the conception of the 1918 Sedition Act, dedicated to limit any expression of opinion that depicted the U.S. Government in a negative light, or was detrimental to American interests. Under the act, anyone could be arrested "for the dissemination of Communist propaganda and conspiracy to incite violence and provoke revolution against the United States Government."

With strong elements of capitalism in place alongside anti-communist doctrines, the Templars pursued their visions even further.

Ford and Olds were also among those who founded Abstergo Industries in 1937, to act as a front for the Templar Order. The corporation would be a means for the Order to accumulate wealth as well as continue to pioneer scientific progress. More importantly, the Templar leaders created Abstergo as a tool which would allow them to ensure that the Plan, formulated by the founders of the corporation, would be fully realized. While the Templars operated behind the scene, never revealing their identity or agenda, they would use the vast resources the corporation provided them to further their ambitions. Through Abstergo Industries, they would help humankind push scientific development to the limit, and would become a leading player in the world's economy.

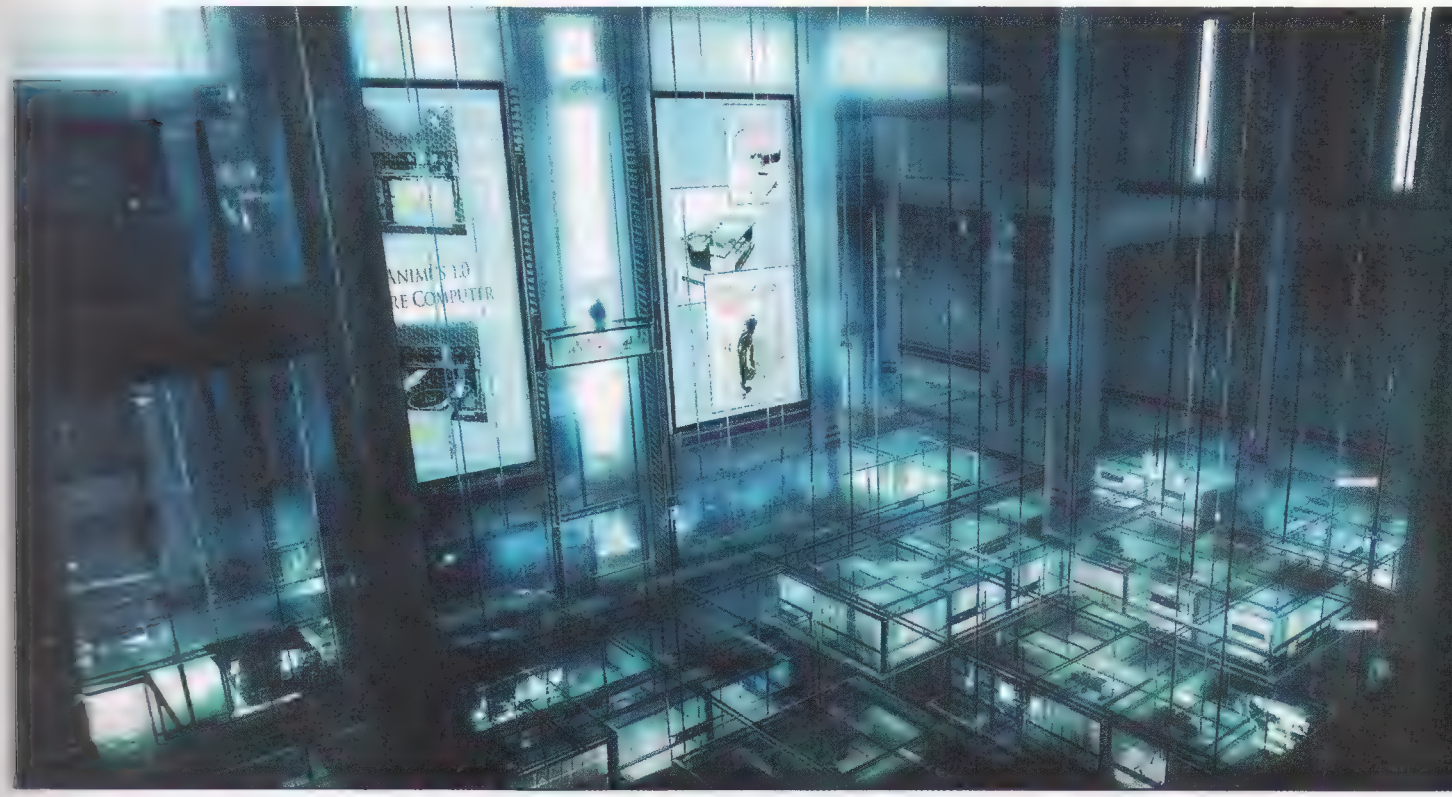
Abstergo Industries kept a low profile for decades, becoming more openly active only toward the end of the 20th century. During that time, the company gradually established itself as a multinational conglomerate, with offices, laboratories and other facilities around the globe. Abstergo also acquired holdings in numerous other major companies, thus slowly establishing its dominion.

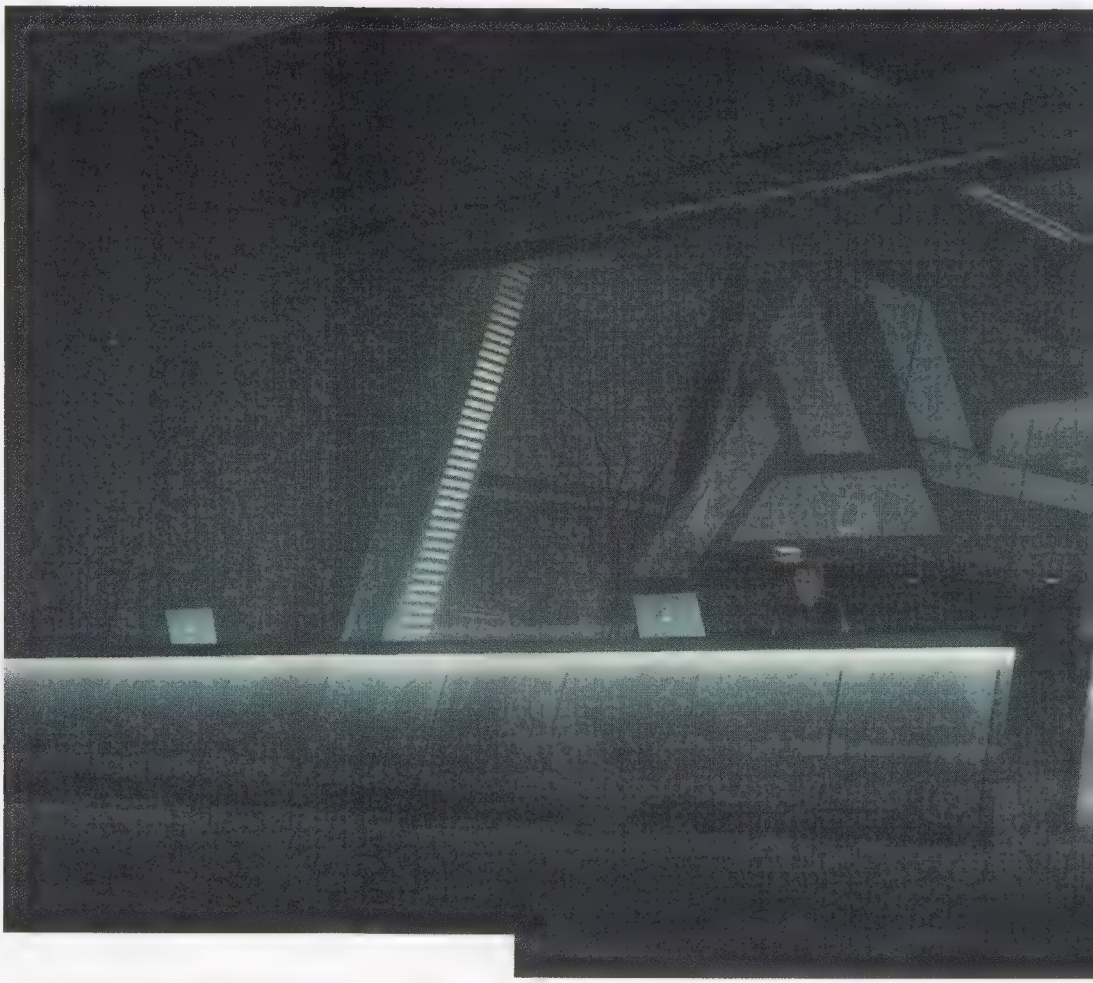
During the Second World War, the Templars used the fear and turmoil brought on by Hitler and Stalin to ensure that science, technology as well as Western society continued to develop as they had planned. While Abstergo and other companies under Templar control apparently conceded ground to the workers and trade unions, they actually ensured that humankind would remain a prey of their vision of capitalism. Abstergo was also involved in the deaths of Harry Dexter White in 1948 and Alan Turing in 1954; [illegible] both men were Templars who had betrayed the Order. Evidence also suggests that Abstergo was behind the liberation of both Iran and Guatemala in the early 1950s.

Abstergo Industries allegedly played a role in the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, because he was opened to the idea of a joint moon landing mission with the Soviets. The Templars, convinced that there was an Apple of Eden—an artifact of the First Civilization—on the Moon, considered the project a threat and acted accordingly. Abstergo supported the American Space Program since its inception, and in all likeliness funded the majority of the endeavors. The Templars wished to remain in control of the program, which culminated in the Apollo 11 mission—the first moon landing—in 1969.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Abstergo Industries continued to strengthen their hold upon the world, changing the fate of several nations such as Argentina, on which it transferred its corporate debt. Several influential men and women joined the Templars, became their allies, or were being unwittingly manipulated by them—Henry Kissinger and Margaret Thatcher among them. In 1991, they helped Boris Yeltsin overthrow Gorbachev in order to allow privatization in Russia.

In November 2000, Daniel Cross, a Templar sleeper agent, killed the Mentor of the Assassin Brotherhood. When he returned to Abstergo, Cross revealed the location of various secret Assassin compounds throughout the world. The Templars then initiated the Great Purge, which aimed at the eradication of every Assassin facility. Emboldened by this major victory over their age-old enemies, the Templars behind Abstergo Industries continue their hunt for the Pieces of Eden, which they need to launch the Eye-Abstergo, an All-In-One telecommunications satellite and the cornerstone of one of their most ambitious endeavors to date.





1 : B : 2
#C

PROJECTS: GENERAL

Abstergo Industries has hundreds of ongoing projects. While the company specializes in pharmaceutical research, it is also involved in several other spheres.

Taking into account both the size and international scope of the corporation, it should come as no surprise that Abstergo scientists and technicians carry out many types of projects, in a number of different countries. However, some of these initiatives are deemed especially important for those who are part of the Templar Order. These specific projects all share a single goal: the betterment of humanity through science and technology. While many of these endeavors have been made public, some are known only to a selected few within the Templar Order.

What follows is a list of some of Abstergo Industries' most important initiatives to date:

SOPHIA PROJECT

Scientists assigned to the Sophia Project study information imprinted on living cells, which are passed on biologically from one vessel to another. By analyzing what these cells contain and how they affect the development of mankind, Abstergo Industries hope to gain a better understanding of human physiology. One day, perhaps, Abstergo scientists may even learn to manipulate this process, which could help them prevent deadly diseases.

PROJECT LEGACY

Project Legacy explored the memories of various subjects through the Data Dump Scanner (DDS) program. Technicians assigned to the project collected raw data from different—and as of yet undisclosed—sources, and used the population at large to analyze it. The initiative also allowed Abstergo Industries to track, observe and isolate individuals who were particularly talented, and the corporation allegedly recruited some of these people.

Due to security concerns, Project Legacy has been put on hold.

[illegible] PROGRAM

This program is the ultimate training simulation for both recruit and veteran Templar agents. Using a variation of the Animus device, it allows participants to explore memory fragments in a simulated three-dimensional environment. However, unlike the Animus Project, the goal of this program is not to explore the genetic memory of its participants, but rather to train Templar agents, pitting them against one another in simulated combat as well as in a variety of other situations.

The Animi Training Program ensures that each participant continuously improves his or her abilities, while developing new skills and furthering their understanding of the past. Furthermore, the program allows Abstergo to closely monitor the progress of its agents, as well as identify the most gifted and dedicated among them.

◆ NEW FLUORIDE

As its name implies, New Fluoride is an innovative type of compound designed for water fluoridation, which was meant to improve the health of the populace at large. However, Abstergo Holdings has been accused of secretly manipulating the water supply of a small town in order to test the synthetic drug. As a result, the FBI is currently investigating Abstergo's pharmaceutical division and the New Fluoride initiative has been temporarily shut down.

◆ AKASHIC SATELLITE PLEXUS

In place since 2008, the Akashic Satellite Plexus is a network of communications, weather and observation satellites orbiting the planet.

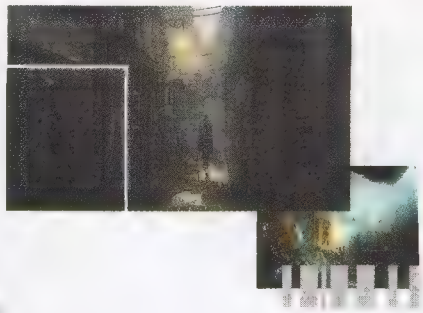
◆ EYE ABSTERGO

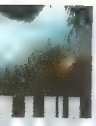
An All-In-One telecommunications satellite, the Eye-Abstergo is scheduled to launch on December 21, 2012. Once in low-Earth orbit, the Eye will be the cornerstone of the Akashic Satellite Plexus.

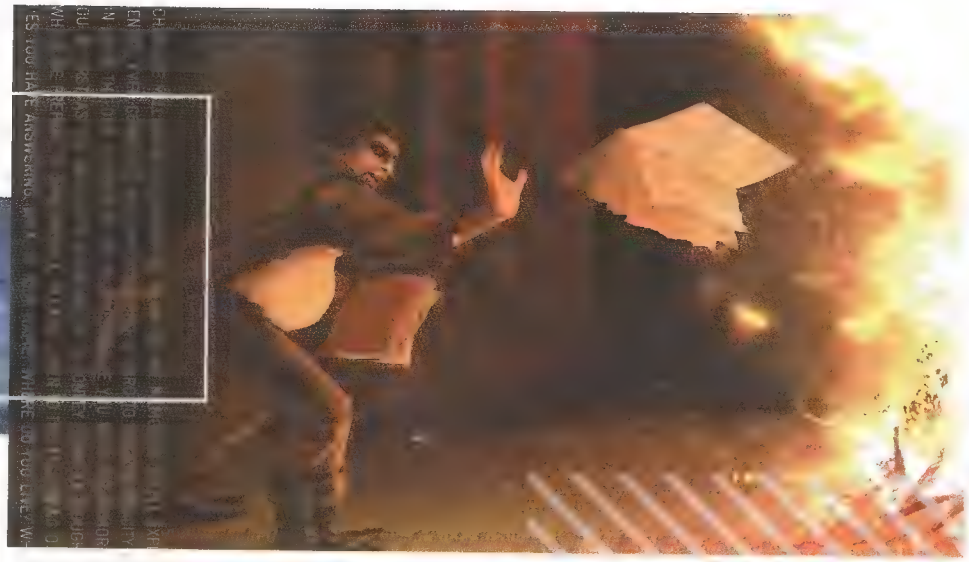
1 : B : 2
#D

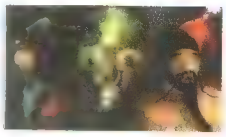
CLASSIFIED MEMORY FRAGMENTS

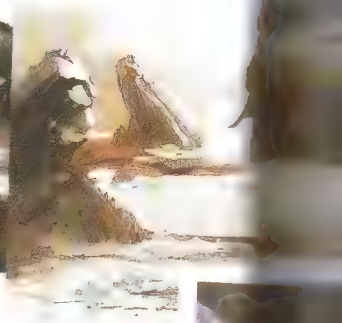
With the Animus device and Data Dump Scanner (DDS) program, Abstergo scientists can not only study but quite literally fully explore genetic memory. Over the years and through various means, Abstergo technicians have been able to collect countless memory fragments. While most of these have yet to be analyzed, all are considered highly classified.

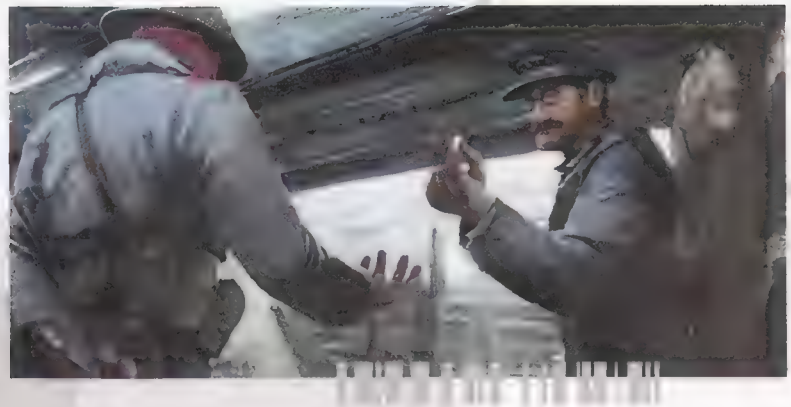


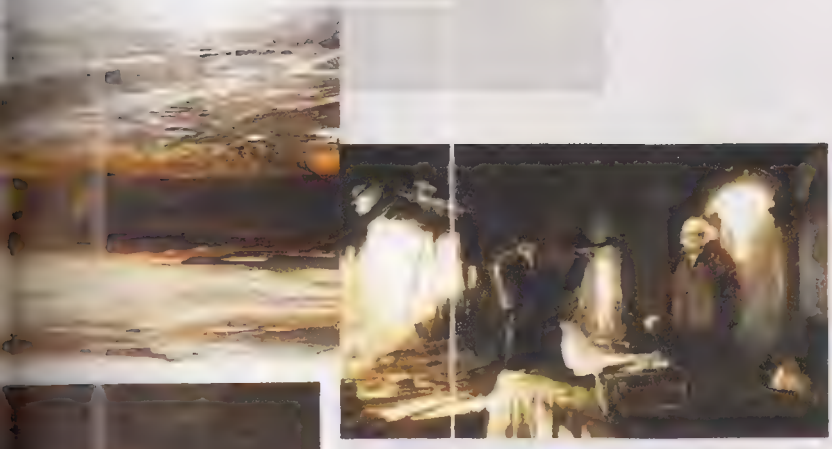












1:B:2
#E

ANIMI AVATARS

While in the simulated three-dimensional environment, participants of the Animi Training Program take on various personas, allowing them to blend into the appropriate historical era.

> MERCENARY

> NOBLEMAN

> OFFICER

> KNIGHT

> BLACKSMITH

> COURTESAN

> DOCTOR

> THIEF

> SMUGGLER

> PRIEST

> CAPTAIN

> HELLEQUIN

> ENGINEER

> HARLEQUIN

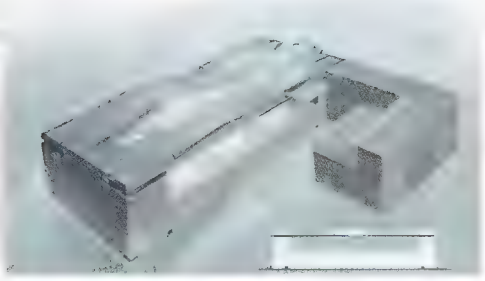
> EXECUTIONER

> FOOTPAD

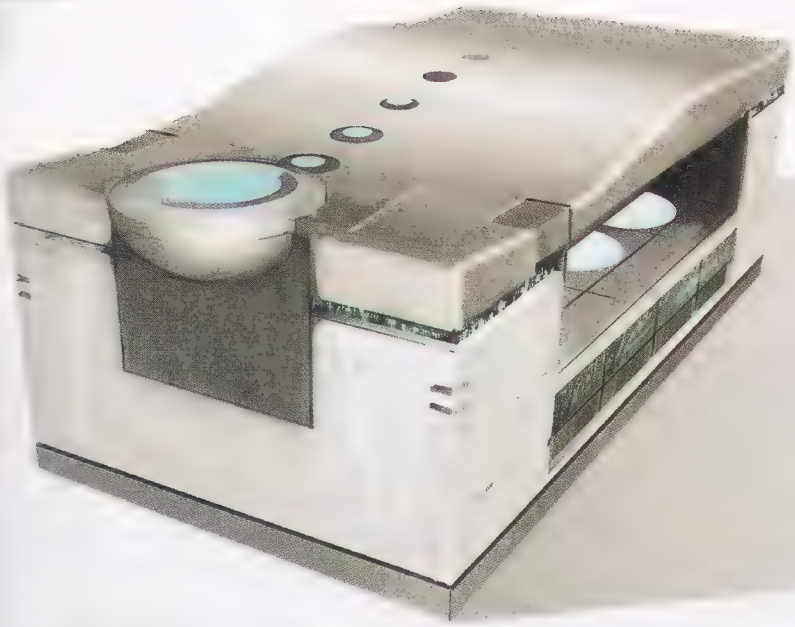
> BARBER

> PROWLER

THE TEMPLAR ORDER: THE ANIMUS



The Animus Project is one of Abstergo Industries' most ambitious initiatives to date. The Animus is a device which unlocks genetic memory encoded within a subject's DNA, subsequently projecting the memories of ancestors within a three-dimensional virtual reality, which subjects can explore.

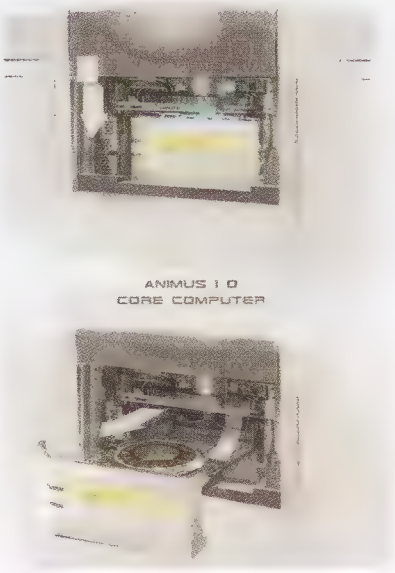


HISTORY

First developed by Abstergo Industries, the Animus prototype was made possible through the research of Warren Vidic, one of the world's leading authorities on genetic memory. Vidic supervised the Animus Project from its inception and was largely responsible for its use on at least 17 primary subjects.

Early experiments with the Animus extended beyond the exploration of genetic memory. Indeed, Warren Vidic used the Animus to manipulate the nature of memory itself. One of the earliest experiments involved Subject 4, a sleeper agent of the Templar Order responsible for infiltrating the Assassin Brotherhood between 1998 and 2000. Subject 4 was one of Abstergo's most successful attempts at using the Animus to control the minds of its subjects and implant fabricated memories.

Abstergo's continued experiments with the Animus Project yielded mixed results, often producing information of little practical value or driving its subjects to insanity due to overexposure, as was the case with Subject 16. However, in September 2011, Lineage Research and Acquisition Division delivered into Vidic's hands a promising subject. Desmond Miles, dubbed Subject 17, was a direct descendent of the Assassin Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad and the key to unlocking the locations of the remaining Pieces of Eden.



ANIMUS 1.0
CORE COMPUTER

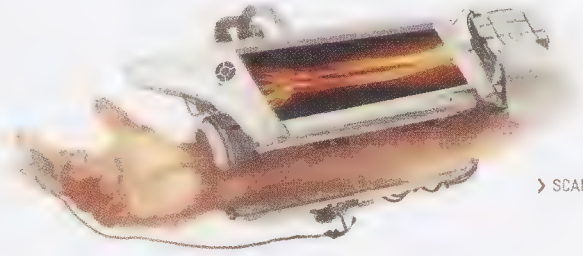
> COMPUTER CORE

> COMPUTER CORE
AND TRANSPORT CASE

Unknown to the Templars, however, the Assassin Brotherhood had been secretly building an Animus of their own: the Animus 2.0. The Animus 2.0 was engineered using blueprints stolen from Abstergo Industries.

The Animus 2.0 provides the Brotherhood with a rare advantage against its adversaries. Using the upgraded Animus, the Assassins acquired the locations of Pieces of Eden and ancient Vaults of the First Civilization, some of which were still unknown to the Templars. However, while the Brotherhood races to prevent the Pieces of Eden from falling into the hands of their enemies, the Templars have initiated a new phase of the Animus Project: the mass production of Animus devices used to train their best and most loyal agents.

> ANIMUS 1.0 SOFTWARE UPGRADE 2.0



> SCANNER

> CEREBRAL TRANSMITTER

> VIRTUAL REALITY RENDERING SCREEN

1 · B : 3

ANIMUS – GENETIC MEMORY

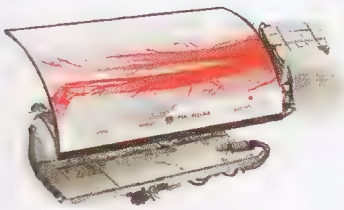
Genetic memory is a theory of evolutionary biology which suggests that the DNA of a species serves as an archive of memories, experiences, skills and knowledge, passed on from ancestor to descendant. The theory attempts to explain animal instinct as a manifestation of genetic memory; the instinctive ability to migrate, hibernate or reproduce without prior first-hand experience demonstrates genetic memory in action. However, the reach of ancestral memory extends beyond natural instincts and includes photographic recollection of the lives of ancestors — their experiences, abilities and emotions — all encrypted within the double helix of DNA.

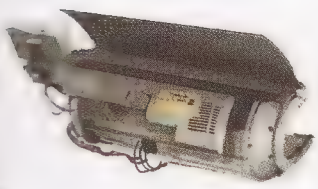
The theory of genetic memory remains a controversial one in most scientific circles, including Academia. Owing partly to suppression of such knowledge by the Templars, but especially because genetic memory is not readily accessible, the concept endures the label of pseudo-science. Nonetheless, genetic memory is the operative theory behind the Animus Project, spearheaded by Abstergo researcher Warren Vidic. His thirty years of research led to the first recorded explorations of genetic memory in human history.

Genetic memory is passed on from parents to child at the moment of conception. While it is possible to explore the earliest memories of an ancestor through the Animus, doing so taxes the subject by reviving the memory of birth trauma. Particularly distressing experiences are therefore potentially harmful to the subject, and overexposure to traumatic memories without prior preparation can result in permanent psychological damage, or even death.

Because of this, the process of exploring genetic memory requires a gradual acclimatization of the subject's subconscious to the memories of the ancestor. This careful process of easing the subject into the identity of the ancestor is known as synchronization. Synchronization works toward an alignment between the subject's identity and that of the ancestor. Given time, a subject becomes increasingly accustomed to the ancestor's memories, which the mind no longer treats as foreign. Rather, these memories integrate with those of the subject. Over time, the subject's identity becomes likewise augmented with the identity of the ancestor. This phenomenon is known as full synchronization, an awakening of dormant memories archived within the DNA, through which the experiences of the ancestor are transferred to the subject.

The study of genetic memory is a recent endeavor and it is not yet fully understood. The potential for the human mind to adapt to ancestral memories suggests that genetic memory is, to some extent, intended to be unlocked. This is the underlying premise behind the training of Desmond Miles through the Animus 2.0.





1 : B : 3
#D

ANIMUS - VIEWING

The Animus functions as a projector and simulator, immersing the user's consciousness within a three-dimensional reconstruction of the ancestor's memories. As the subject explores the memories projected through the Animus, the program begins to change in subtle ways. These changes are represented as glitches in virtual reality, and allow the subject to navigate through a memory more closely.

In order to facilitate the subject's seamless transition into the projected memory, the Animus makes use of a function known as the memory corridor: an isolated virtual area that exists outside the simulation. Represented as an empty field, the memory corridor allows users to ease themselves into the Animus and grow acclimated with its interface. The corridor is also used as virtual training grounds independent of a subject's ancestral memories. It can also be used to isolate specific data for closer examination.

The memory corridor is one application among several employed by the Animus to aid the subject's mind synchronize with ancestral memories. Consequently, the Animus adapts to the subject's level of synchronization by limiting exposure to compatible memories and filtering out dangerous, traumatic or otherwise incompatible experiences. This process was further refined in later models of the Animus; the Animus 2.0, for instance, is capable of dynamic reconstruction of a memory proportional to the subject's synchronization. As the subject's subconscious becomes increasingly comfortable with the Animus, the device reveals, analyzes and reconstructs increasingly deeper memories.

The deepest of these memories are those repressed by the subject's ancestor. Due to the risk of psychological damage, such memories are often far too emotionally volatile to explore without sufficient synchronization. Occasionally, a subject may experience a form of vicarious *déjà vu*, successfully triggering the ancestor's repressed memories.

B : 3

BLEEDING EFFECT

A psychosomatic condition in which the subject experiences the memories of an ancestor through vivid hallucinations, the bleeding effect is a consequence of excessive exposure to the Animus device. The effect takes its name from the tendency of ancestral memories to bleed into the subject's consciousness, leading to unconscious visions and, in more severe cases, permanent psychological damage.

While the nature of the bleeding effect is not yet fully understood, it was first observed by Abstergo researchers Warren Vidic and Lucy Stillman during the course of their experiments. The bleeding effect varies in severity, and symptoms are generally proportional to the degree of exposure to the Animus. Recent experiments have shown that the effect offers potential benefits, conferring onto the user not only the memories of the ancestor but also some of his experience and abilities.

While the bleeding effect is caused by exposure to the Animus, its symptoms manifest long after the subject has left the confines of the device. These symptoms include visual and auditory hallucinations, nightmares, nausea, pain and, in more extreme cases, irreparable psychological damage. Before the bleeding effect was identified as a side effect of the Animus, its symptoms were mistaken for signs of acute paranoid schizophrenia and multiple personality disorders.

Exposure to the Animus at an early age can compound the symptoms of the bleeding effect. Abstergo is responsible for inducing the bleeding effect in at least one child: Subject 4. This experience was later duplicated with Subject 16. Owing to dangerously long periods of immersion within the Animus, Subject 16's condition worsened. He began to experience the memories of several ancestors concurrently, leading to confusion, hallucination and loss of identity.

Despite the potential dangers of the bleeding effect, Assassins and Templars have begun experimenting with controlled exposure to the Animus in an attempt to benefit from its positive side effects; such as unlocking a subject's hidden potential and instilling him with some of his ancestor's skills. Correctly performed, this technique allows for limited and acceptable side effects, with hallucinations and visions rarely lasting more than thirty seconds.

FIRST CIVILIZATION

Little is known about the First Civilization, but Those Who Came Before, as they are known, were native to the planet. Like humans, they were the product of evolution, a process that undoubtedly took hundreds of thousands of years. This ancient race, now extinct, was so advanced that modern-day scientists—at least the few fortunate enough to have come across their technology—have not yet even begun to fathom their knowledge.

Those Who Came Before were anatomically similar to humans, although they were taller and their skulls approximately 30% larger. It is theorized that their larger skulls housed bigger brains, which could explain why they possessed six senses instead of just five, allowing for a more sophisticated perception of space and time. Those Who Came Before also had a longer lifespan and evidence of their passing can be found throughout the planet, not only in the ruins of their lost civilization but also in ancient myths and legends. One theory is that skulls from archeological sites around Boskop, South Africa, give fossil evidence of their existence.

HISTORY

It is impossible to tell when the origins Those Who Came Before begin, nor how long they have existed, but archeological findings suggest that at its height their civilization spanned the entire globe. Although they have been extinct for millennia, these beings possessed highly developed technology and their scientific advancements far exceeded the level which modern-day science has thus far reached.

It is through their sophisticated scientific knowledge that these entities were able to create human beings in their own image, transforming a preexisting species and radically altering its genetic makeup as well as accelerating its natural evolutionary process. However, through this genetic manipulation, Those Who Came Before also deprived humans of abilities which they themselves possessed. Compared to them humans were somewhat lesser beings, limited to five senses and a shorter lifespan.

Evidence suggests that Those Who Came Before purposefully limited the potential of mankind to ensure it would remain enslaved. Indeed, the members of the First Civilization created humans to serve them, and used the Pieces of Eden—complex technological devices—to ensure obedience. Yet, despite their many flaws, humans eventually freed themselves and survived, while Those Who Came Before perished. It has been hypothesized that this was in part due to the fact that, over the course of several generations, certain human beings became a crossbreed between humans and members of the First Civilization. These humans who had First Civilization DNA could, somehow, resist the effect the Pieces of the Eden had on their brethren.

After centuries—if not millennia—of enslavement, early generations of humans eventually revolted against their masters, and war broke out. While Those Who Came Before had superior technology, humans were more numerous, and many of the First Civilization were killed during the conflict. Eventually, a great catastrophe—the advent of which went unnoticed during the conflict—struck the Earth, putting an end to the war.

Known as the Toba catastrophe, which occurred between 69,000 and 77,000 years ago, this cataclysm affected both mankind and Those Who Came Before. However, few members of the First Civilization survived, and as a result they gradually became extinct. Meanwhile, what remained of humankind scattered across the planet, gradually growing in numbers with each passing generation. It took tens of thousands of years for Those Who Came Before to

completely disappear from the face of the Earth, but the Toba catastrophe undoubtedly destroyed their society and ushered mankind into a new age.

After the Toba catastrophe the survivors of the First Civilization continued to interact with mankind, influencing many aspects of most societies across the globe. Ancient pantheons— such as the Greek, Roman, Etruscan, Indian and Mesoamerican pantheons, to name a few— were largely influenced by Those Who Came Before, as humans undoubtedly mistook these beings possessing incomprehensible technology for gods. The fact that myths and deities from different cultures share so many similarities only strengthens this hypothesis.

Recent research also provides indisputable evidence that beings calling themselves Consus, Juno, Jupiter and Minerva were members of the First Civilization. It is yet unknown how these beings were able to do so, but they evidently continued to influence mankind even years after their passing.

1 : C
#3

PIECES OF EDEN

Those Who Came Before perished long ago, but their technology has survived throughout the ages. Although extremely rare, these artifacts, which have been dubbed Pieces of Eden, are immensely powerful. In the old days, people believed these objects were magical in nature. Some even imagined they were of alien origin. This is not so. Pieces of Eden are ancient, yet very advanced technological devices, which predate the earliest historical records of human civilization. While little is known about them, some Pieces of Eden have been designed to react to—and manipulate—human physiology. The remnants of this complex technology continued to shape the course of human history until modern times.

Pieces of Eden conferred great power to their wielders. Myths from across the world contain references to the Sword and Staff of Eden as icons of martial, political and divine authority. Although it is impossible to tell how many such Swords or Staves have been created or retrieved, the presence of such artifacts generally coincided with the rise of powerful leaders, many of whom were immortalized in legend. The Greek hero Perseus was among the first to wield a Sword of Eden, and such an artifact no doubt became the basis for Excalibur, the sword of Arthurian legend. It is believed that Attila the Hun also used a Sword of Eden to unify his empire, and that in the hands of Joan of Arc the Sword helped galvanize French forces during the Hundred Years War.

The Staff, developed into a consistent symbol of authority, embodied sovereignty and dominion, and individuals who wielded it quickly rose to positions of preeminence. One of the earliest known uses of a Staff's power is described in the Old Testament, when the prophet Moses wielded it to create an illusion of parting the Red Sea. Where the Sword of Eden was a weapon of conquest, the illusory powers of the Staff made it an ideal instrument in the maintenance and administration of power, as illustrated by its consistent appearance in the hands of kings, administrators and prophets. One of these extraordinary Pieces of Eden helped Alexander the Great become the mightiest conqueror the world had ever seen. Another eventually became the Papal staff, and a Staff of Eden also found its way to the court of the Russian Tsardom. Although this Staff has been destroyed in 1908, a splinter of it—which still held great power—has been uncovered. The latest known possessor of this splinter was the Russian Assassin Nikolai Orelov, who stole it from the grave of Grigori Rasputin before journeying to the United States of America.

Furthermore, Those Who Came Before relied on various recording devices. While thousands of these have undoubtedly been made, five—dubbed the Masyaf Keys—are well known, having been used by Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad as memory seals to lock his secret library.

The Pieces of Eden have long been an axis around which revolves the interminable conflict between the Assassins and Templars. During the Renaissance, both factions fought over ownership of the Shroud, an artifact with mysterious healing capabilities. The earliest appearance of the Shroud can be traced back to Greek mythology, and evidence suggests the artifact has been used on Marcus Junius Brutus. During the Renaissance, the Shroud, hidden in Monteriggioni by the Assassins was moved to Agnadello to prevent it from falling into Templar hands. It was also used to save the life of the boy Giovanni Borgia, son of Lucrezia, with strange consequences on his mind.

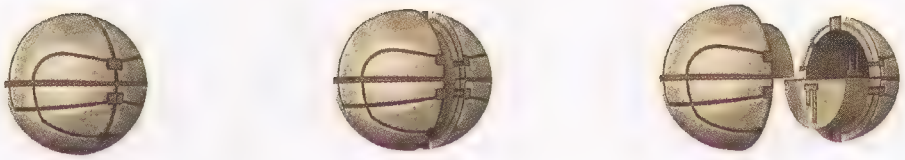
In 1520, the Brotherhood discovered the Crystal Skull in South America, a Piece of Eden which allowed for telepathic communication over great distances. Exactly how many of these devices have survived throughout the ages remains to be determined.

Although the conflict over the Pieces of Eden continues to this day, the Templars have been consistently successful in collecting them, and many remain in their possession. No one knows exactly how many of these artifacts have been recovered over the centuries.

During the Revolutionary War period, the Templars and the Assassins discovered new Pieces of Eden left by Those Who Came Before. The full power and reach of these artifacts were unknown, but both factions believed that they were keys that would lead to the discovery of important information about the First Civilization.

The Templar Master, Reginald Birch, hypothesized that the key could contain knowledge, be used as a weapon, or as a tool to find information about the First Civilization. The Piece of Eden helped the Templars locate a precursor site on the American frontier.

Generations later, Desmond Miles used the Animus to relieve Connor's memories and locate the Piece of Eden. He brought it to the Temple built by Those Who Came Before, where it was critical in preventing the end of the world.



APPLES OF EDEN

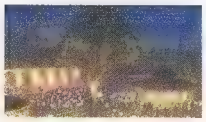
Among the most coveted Pieces of Eden, Apples are artifacts of First Civilization technology designed to ensure humanity's subservience, potentially allowing the control of a subject's thoughts, emotions and behavior. Humans were predisposed to be influenced by Apples of Eden, as their genetic structure was tailored specifically to respond to the artifacts in order to facilitate humanity's obedience to Those Who Came Before, the beings of the First Civilization. The Apples were held by many throughout history, and those who possessed such a relic inevitably changed the world.

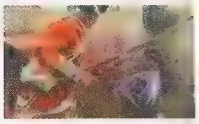
Ironically, the Apples were likely responsible for the end of humanity's subservience to their First Civilization masters. Adam and Eve, believed to be among the first humans to revolt against Those Who Came Before, retrieved an Apple and used it to spark a rebellion between early humans and members of the First Civilization. The Apples remained prominent throughout history, attributed to catalyzing major events, such as the Trojan War in the 12th century BCE.

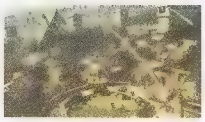
The power of the Apples to control the minds of men was recognized by a small group of individuals who would be known, by 1129 CE, as the Templar Order. The Templars' desire to unify the world under one ruling body motivated a hunt for the Pieces of Eden—and the Apples in particular—which continues to this day. In 1191, the Assassin turned Templar Al Mualim temporarily seized control over the citadel of Masyaf using the power of an Apple. His defeat at the hands of Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad marked the beginning of a period of intense conflict between Assassins and Templars for control over these particular Pieces of Eden.

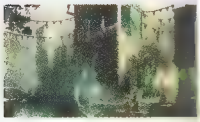
The Apples of Eden are versatile tools which can also function as archives stored with First Civilization knowledge. Both the Assassins and the Templars have explored this hidden knowledge, although the Templars were particularly aggressive in obtaining and capitalizing on the information contained within. Study of the Apples and similar Pieces of Eden led to several scientific breakthroughs and technological advancements. In particular, the Apples of Eden are capable of tracking and projecting the locations of every other Piece of Eden on an illusory map of the world. This map, rediscovered in 2012 via the Animus, proved essential to the efforts of both Templars and Assassins in the hunt for remaining Pieces of Eden.

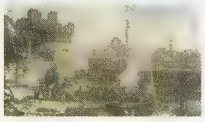
The Templars took the lead in this hunt and by the 21st century were aware of at least five Apples of Eden. However, one of these artifacts was destroyed at Denver International Airport—an event which postponed the planned launch of the Eye-Abstergo satellite to December 21, 2012. Since then, the search for the Apples has intensified.











STORY

PART # 2

Legacy
American Revolution
Imperial
Recent History

AN ANCIENT DIVIDE

The battle between Templars and Assassins ranges over the course of humanity's history, from the dawn of humankind to today's modern era. Their philosophical differences, rooted in a basic divergence in how best to care for their fellow human beings, have been the source of many clashes. While nowadays the battle between those factions is founded in politics and played out behind the scenes of intrigue—with some rare, yet devastating exceptions—previous centuries saw conflicts erupt in a far more brutal and bloody manner.

We begin with the Middle Ages.

2
#A

THE MIDDLE AGES

THE THIRD CRUSADE

On July 15, 1099, a Crusader army entered the city of Jerusalem after an ambitious journey across Anatolia and the Middle East. This event marked the beginning of a Crusader presence in the Holy Land that lasted for almost two centuries. The various "Crusader states"—based each around Antioch, Edessa, Tripoli and Jerusalem—that emerged in the wake of the First Crusade maintained an uneasy existence, facing constant hostility from the surrounding Muslim powers and suffering a severe lack of manpower at times. Nonetheless, aided by powerful military orders, such as the Knights Templar and the Knights Hospitalier, they held on until Saladin united much of the Islamic world.

In 1176, Saladin attempted to take the city of Masyaf, where the headquarters of the Assassin Brotherhood is situated. During the siege, Umar—father of Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad—sacrificed himself in order to save a fellow Assassin, and the Brotherhood successfully prevented Saladin from taking the city. In 1187, Saladin and his armies crushed a Crusader force at Hattin and proceeded to retake Jerusalem and Acre. The citadel of Masyaf was targeted again in 1189, this time by the Crusader forces, but was successfully defended. This event saw Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad earn his title of Master Assassin. Overall, the Crusaders managed to hold on to Antioch and Tripoli, but their hold was tenuous at best.

This turn of events drew a dramatic response from Europe. Pope Gregory VIII immediately demanded an expedition against the Saracens, and the aristocracy of Europe answered *en masse*. Whereas the First Crusade had been dominated by minor nobles, landless knights and a great mass of volunteer peasants, the Third drew three of Europe's greatest monarchs: Richard the Lionheart of England, Philip II of France, and Frederick Barbarossa, the Holy Roman Emperor, earning it the name the "Kings' Crusade". Barbarossa's expedition set off first, attempting to travel overland, but foundered when the Emperor fell off his horse and drowned in a river; only a fraction of his army made it to the Holy Land. Philip and Richard chose a sea route, leaving Marseille together by boat, in 1190. Philip went on ahead while Richard stopped to rescue his sister Joan from King Tancred of Sicily and to capture the island of Cyprus from the Byzantines. In June 1191, Richard finally arrived in the Holy Land and reinforced Philip, who was already besieging Acre. A month later the city fell. The Crusaders disagreed about the division of the

spoils, however, and both Philip's French army and the remaining imperial soldiers returned home.

Richard continued onwards down the coast towards Jaffa, but in September found his progress blocked by Saladin's army at Arsuf. The elite warriors of the Hospitaliers and Templars won the day, and Saladin was driven back. Soon Richard was within sight of Jerusalem, but realized that even if he took the city attempting to hold it would be futile. He entered into negotiations with Saladin, and in the Treaty of Ramla it was agreed that the Muslims would keep Jerusalem, with provision for unarmed Christian pilgrims to journey there, while the Crusaders kept control of most of the ports. This signaled peace, at least for a while.

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

In 1191, Assassins Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad, Malik Al-Sayf and Kadar Al-Sayf were sent by Al Mualim, leader of the Assassins, to retrieve an ancient artifact—a Piece of Eden—housed underneath Solomon's Temple. At the start of the mission, Altaïr displayed a blatant disregard for the three tenets of the Creed. When the group entered the tunnels leading to the temple, Altaïr killed an elderly man who might have warned the guards, even though he was an innocent. Malik cautioned him of the dangers of not following the Creed though Kadar, his young brother, was nonetheless impressed by Altaïr's skill. Altaïr dismissed Malik's warnings and the mission continued. When they came face to face with a group of Templars, Altaïr continued to ignore the Creed, rushing into the fray without giving any thought for hiding or stealth. His attack on the Templar leader, Robert de Sable, was neutralized. De Sable issued a warning for Altaïr to take back to Al Mualim, stating that the Holy Land was lost to them and that they should escape while they could. The Templar shoved Altaïr through some scaffolding, causing a cave-in and separating him from his fellow Assassins. Leaving Malik and Kadar for dead, Altaïr returned to the Assassins' fortress in Masyaf, defeated.

Though Altaïr reported that the mission had failed, Malik soon returned to Masyaf with the treasure they had been seeking—an Apple of Eden. Badly injured, Malik blamed Altaïr for the death of his brother, Kadar. He also warned Al Mualim that as a result of Altaïr's brazenness, a Templar army was planning an attack on Masyaf.

THE SIEGE OF MASYAF

Shortly thereafter, Robert de Sable and a large army of Templar soldiers marched on Masyaf, attacking the village. In an attempt to protect the villagers and the fortress, Assassins were sent to fight off the invading host. With the Templar soldiers attacking citizens

> MASYAF TOWER

...ssins alike, panic quickly spread through the ... sing Altaïr and other Assassins as a distrac... of the villagers were safely moved into ...ess. Despite their best efforts the Assassins ...ced to retreat. Robert de Sable confronted Al ... at the gates, killing hostages and threatening ... out the survivors if he did not surrender ...e of Eden to him. The leader of the Assassin ...erhood refused, replying that his men were not ... death, and that they welcomed it. As evi... this claim, Altaïr and several other Assas... apt from a tower of the fortress, apparently ... to their deaths into the ravine below. This ... a subterfuge to allow the Assassins to ... counterattack. Altaïr landed safely in a hay... used his hidden position to access another tower, well stocked with logs. Once there, he cut the rope securing the logs and they tumbled out onto the unsuspecting Templar forces. With many killed or injured, de Sable's army was forced to retreat. The fortress was thus saved, thanks in large part to Altaïr, but Al Mualim could not ignore the fact that it was his brash actions and his dismissal of the Creed that had placed them all in danger in the first place. As a result of his failures at Solomon's Temple and the repercussions for the Brotherhood, he was stripped of his weapons as well as his rank.

UNDERSTANDING THE CREED

Despite his mistakes, Altaïr was given an opportunity to redeem himself with a series of assassinations on both sides of the forces engaged in the Crusades. Thus Altaïr traveled to Damascus, Acre, Jerusalem and Arsuf in search of nine targets, all the while relearning the importance of the Creed.

The first target on the list was Tamir, a black market weapons dealer quartered in the poor district of Damascus. Altaïr's arrival was greeted by the local Assassins with the news that he must do the initial investigating for himself—work that he begrudgingly acknowledged suited his new rank. While gathering information he learned of an unusually large shipment of weapons for an unknown buyer. Altaïr tracked Tamir to a market and assassinated him. His dying words revealed that he believed he was working for a greater purpose. After killing Tamir, Altaïr returned to Masyaf. Al Mualim instructed him to travel to the Saracen city of Jerusalem, where a slave trader named Talal awaited his blade. Malik, the new leader of the Assassins' Bureau in Jerusalem, was still outraged that Altaïr lived while his brother had died as a result of his carelessness, and he did not offer the Assassin much help. During the investigation, Altaïr discovered that the large slave circle run by Talal was essentially ignored by the city guards, most likely due to his ties with notable figures in Jerusalem. In addition, he uncovered evidence that Talal was sending slaves to Acre, a city controlled by the Crusaders.

Altaïr finally located Talal in a warehouse filled with people being forced into slavery. The slaver sent his guards to attack and a chase through the streets of Jerusalem ensued. Altaïr eventually brought his prey to the ground. With death looming near, Talal revealed that he knew his death would not impede the work of the Templars in the Holy Land.

…ident that his actions were helping the people he …captured, Talal insisted that he was their savior.

…s next target was in Acre, fighting alongside …rusading forces. Garnier de Naplouse, Grand …er of the Knights Hospitalier, was a physician …to be conducting ethically unsound experi…n his patients. Altaïr discovered that Garnier …receiving shipments of unwilling subjects from …m to fuel his experiments, most likely from …providing a link between two of his targets. …outing out Garnier's hospital, he made his …de and put an end to the Grand Master's life. …last breath, Garnier expressed that his work …gave purpose to his patients, their previous …ong being meaningless.

…ngly troubled by the revelations of his tar… Altaïr moved on to Abu'l Nuqoud, a rich mer… ng in Damascus. With lavish appetites, the …ged freely on luxuries such as food, drink …ertainment. Altaïr soon learned that a grand …was being held at the merchant's home, with much of the city's nobility in attendance. He snuck into the party unnoticed, and listened as Abu'l gave a speech to his guests, admonishing them for supporting Saladin's war, for talking behind his back, and for their bigotry. He then revealed that the wine he had served them was poisoned. In the panic that followed, Altaïr took the opportunity to slay his target. Abu'l claimed he stole money from the people not to fund Saladin's war, but to fight for a greater purpose, much like Altaïr himself. The Assassin resented the comparison and the merchant died insisting that a New World would soon dawn.

Altaïr then returned to the Crusader city of Acre in search of his fifth target, William of Montferrat, the regent who ruled with an oppressive hand. Altaïr quickly took him down, accusing him of planning to kill Richard the Lionheart and take Acre for his son. William insisted that he had intended to give Acre back to its people and that his oppressive edicts had been but preparation for the New World which was soon to come—where food would be rationed fairly for all, crime eliminated, and the soldiers ordered

and disciplined. In killing him, Altaïr had not saved anyone, but damned them.

Unable to ignore the cryptic messages of his targets any longer, Altaïr, confronted his mentor. Al Mualim revealed that each victim had been a high-ranking Templar holding allegiance to Robert de Sable, thus explaining their common vision of the future. Satisfied with that explanation, Altaïr tracked his next target, Majd Addin, to Jerusalem

In Saladin's absence, Majd Addin ruled the city of Jerusalem through fear and intimidation. Altaïr planned to take down Addin during one of the public executions he liked to stage—only to learn from Malik that a fellow Assassin was one of the accused. Altaïr managed to blend with the crowd, and after several people were executed he struck at his target allowing other Assassins to rescue their brother. As the tyrant laid dying, he reveals that unlike Altaïr's other victims, he had joined the Templars solely to gain power. Addin's reasons for killing served no greater purpose other than securing his own station.

When Altaïr returned to Masyaf, Al Mualim explained the role of the Apple of Eden in the Templar's plans for building their New World. He told the young Assassin of the powers it possessed, and both agreed that it must never again fall into Templar hands. With that, Altaïr departed for Damascus in search of Jubair al Hakim, also a Templar.

Though a scholar, Jubair displayed a deep disdain for knowledge, convinced that it tainted and corrupted the minds of the people rather than enlightening them. During his observation, Altaïr learned of several activities Jubair supported, such as mass book burnings and preaching about a New World. He followed Jubair for some time, witnessing many of his atrocities against the people and literature of the city. He took Jubair's life as he preached to the masses. As he died, Jubair displayed clear knowledge of the Assassins' philosophy, calling Altaïr a fool for believing that educating a man would set him on the path of peace.

Before Altaïr continued with his mission, he spoke with Al Mualim once more about what he had learned in the course of his mission. While hunting down his targets, Altaïr had gained a clearer understanding of the Brotherhood's work; while the Templars sought to control people, the Assassins strove to free them. With this knowledge, Altaïr returned once more to Acre in order to find Sibrand, the Grand Master of the Knights Teutonic.

Afraid for his life because of the death of his fellow Templars at Altaïr's hand, Sibrand had doubled the patrols around Acre. He had also taken control of the docks in order to prepare a blockade to prevent outside aide from reaching Acre once the Templars put their plan into motion. It was there that Altaïr cornered and slew him. In his dying breath, Sibrand frantically exclaimed that the Templar treasure—the Apple of Eden—was proof that their mortal life was all there was, and that nothing was waiting for anyone beyond the veil of death. He also revealed that he had joined the Templars in the hope of freeing mankind from the tyranny of faith.

Altaïr returned to Jerusalem after hearing that Robert de Sable would be in the city to attend Majd Addin's funeral. He planned to assassinate the Templar Grand Master there, but fell into an ambush. After dispatching de Sable's guards, Altaïr pinned the Grand Master down and removed his helmet, only to discover in his stead a woman, named Maria Thorpe—de Sable's personal steward. Used as a decoy, Maria had given de Sable an opportunity to escape and implement a final ploy to best the Assassins. She revealed to Altaïr that the Grand Master was on his way to Arsuf to convince both Crusaders and Saracens to unite against a common enemy: the Assassins. Now mindful of the Creed, Altaïr left Maria alive and quickly set out for Arsuf in order to complete his mission.

When Altaïr arrived at Arsuf, the Crusader and Saracen armies were already engaged in battle. He had to fight his way through forces from both sides, but finally managed to reach Richard the Lionheart. The King of England was with Robert de Sable, and Altaïr attempted to reason with the monarch, exposing the Grand Master's treachery. King Richard was swayed by the arguments of both Altaïr and de Sable, so he decided to leave the decision to God, calling for a duel between the two. Altaïr bested de Sable, but before he died the Grand Master informed him that Al Mualim had in fact been conspiring with the Templars he had sent Altaïr to kill. Taking his leave of Richard, Altaïr returned to Masyaf to confront his master.

› MASYAF

RETURN TO MASYAF

[illegible] returning to Masyaf Altaïr discov[illegible] many of the Assassins under the [illegible] of Al Mualim's Apple of Eden, [illegible]ting his entry into the fortress. [illegible]—who had a newfound respect for [illegible]—and several other Assassins not yet [illegible] by the artifact were also aware of [illegible]m's treachery, and offered their [illegible] Altaïr. The latter eventually made [illegible] to the Al Mualim. Al Mualim used [illegible]er of the Apple to fight Altaïr, dis[illegible]g Assassins as former targets and [illegible]g copies of himself. Though he was [illegible] to control Altaïr's mind like he [illegible] the others, Al Mualim nevertheless [illegible]ize him long enough to explain [illegible] there could never be peace as long as [illegible] had free will. Their roles now reversed [illegible] their differences irreconcilable, they [illegible] to the death. With Altaïr's victory, [illegible]trol Al Mualim had exerted over the [illegible]s lifted. Soon afterwards, Altaïr was [illegible] leader of the Brotherhood.

CYPRUS

Following the death of Robert de Sable and the disruption of their plans to take control of the Holy Land, the Knights Templar, under the leadership of Armand Bouchart, began preparations to relocate west, building up a fleet in the harbor at Acre. Hot on their heels were the Assassins, now led by Altaïr. They attacked the harbor, capturing de Sable's former steward, Maria Thorpe, and learning that the Templars were moving to the island of Cyprus, recently purchased from Richard the Lionheart.

Altaïr, taking Maria with him, crossed to Cyprus and made contact with the Cypriot resistance, islanders fighting against Templar rule. Together they worked to weaken Bouchart's hold on the island, eliminating several key members of the Order in the towns of Kyrenia and Limassol, and eventually instigating a full-on revolt against the Templars. During this process Maria was able to escape from captivity, but when she sought the help of Grand Master Armand Bouchart, he ordered her arrested. Altaïr rescued Maria from the Templars and she eventually decided to ally herself with her former enemies, the Assassins. Maria eventually led Altaïr to a secret Templar Archive under Limassol Castle, where they confronted Bouchart.

Bouchart revealed that the Templar Archive had been one of the Order's best kept secrets. The Archive had been protected by the Byzantine ruler of Cyprus, Isaac Comnenus, who had let the Templars have free reign of the island until it was captured by Richard the Lionheart. Afraid that King Richard would discover their secrets, the Templars had purchased the island back from him. By the time Altaïr and Maria arrived, Bouchart was in the process of emptying the Archive. Altaïr and Bouchart fought, with the Assassin coming out victorious. He and Maria then fled the Archive as it collapsed around them, escaping just in time.

With Cyprus free and Bouchart defeated, Altaïr decided to work on studying the secrets of the Apple of Eden, the result of which he wrote in his Codex. Maria, refusing to accept the ways and ideals of those she had once been loyal to, completely abandoned the Templars and joined Altaïr. They eventually married in 1193 and had two sons, Darim and Sef. The ensuing years marked an era of change for the Brotherhood, with Altaïr implementing reforms which saw the Assassins discard many of the ceremonial elements that had defined them, including a gradual but steady decentralization of the Order so as to allow a network of Assassin cells to be established across the world. By 1209, the Assassins discovered that their efforts at globalization were being matched by the Templars—a fact which did little to please the Brotherhood, but much to strengthen the resolve of its members.

MONGOLIA

The rise of Genghis Khan eventually drew Altaïr's attention. Suspecting a Piece of Eden was responsible for the tyrant's rise to power, he decided to investigate. After placing Malik in charge of the Masyaf and the Brotherhood, Altaïr journeyed east to Mongolia with Maria and Darim, his eldest son, to meet up with a local Assassin named Qulan Gal. Should the Mongol leader have indeed come into possession of an artifact of Eden, then they would need to intervene.

Upon their arrival in Mongolia in 1227, they elaborated a plan with Qulan Gal to assassinate Genghis Khan. Though the first attempt failed, the second—carried out by Darim and Qulan Gal—was a success, earning Qulan Gal much fame among the Assassins for his stance against the tyrant and his part in his death. However, it was never determined whether Genghis Khan truly had access to a Piece of Eden, or not.

CIVIL WAR

During Altaïr's absence, Abbas—a former friend and bitter rival—masterminded the death of his youngest son, Sef. Malik was falsely accused of this crime and imprisoned, thus allowing Abbas to take over the Brotherhood. Malik's murder at Abbas' order was the last step of the plan, which was triggered shortly after Altaïr and Maria returned from Mongolia. The act caused Altaïr to lose control of his emotions. Enraged, he challenged Abbas to take the Apple of Eden from him—with dreadful consequences. His anger, contained and enhanced by the Apple, infected the mind of the man charged with retrieving it from him. The man, also Malik's murderer, was overwhelmed by the Apple and began to stab himself, striking out at Maria in the process and fatally wounding her before ending his own life. Devastated by his wife's death, Altaïr fled Masyaf.

Twenty years later, after realizing that Abbas had been mishandling the Brotherhood grievously, Altaïr returned to Masyaf and befriended Malik's son, Tazim Al-Sayf. Together they deigned to remove Abbas from power. The takeover was easy, with most of the Assassins welcoming his return and Abbas surrendering when he saw how little support he had. Abbas unwisely taunted Altaïr to reclaim the Brotherhood without the loss of a single Assassin, an act which cost him his life as Altaïr used the Hidden Pistol for the first time, successfully meeting the terms of the challenge—taking back the Order without losing a single *true* Assassin in the process.

> MAFFEO POLO

› NICCOLÒ POLO

THE END OF MASYAF

Again in charge of the Brotherhood, Altaïr ordered the construction of a library within the fortress and invited the explorers Maffeo and Niccolò Polo to visit it. At the same time he began to finalize the dismantling of the Brotherhood's headquarters within Masyaf, preferring to see many Assassins Guilds across the world rather than one central quarter of operations. When the Mongols, led by Genghis Khan's grandson, attacked Masyaf, Altaïr helped Maffeo and Niccolò flee the city, entrusting them with five keys to his secret library, which he hoped would stay locked for many centuries. These formed the key to open his library, which he was planning to seal. Altaïr also gave his Codex to the Polò brothers, trusting them to establish Assassin cells throughout the world.

Finally, Altaïr stood at the entrance of his library and spoke one final time with his son, Darim. Once Darim had left, Altaïr locked himself up in the library and took the Apple of Eden. He had come to realize that his destiny was not to be passed on in ink, but in blood. He hid his Apple in a secret alcove, then sat down to record one last memory into a sixth and final seal, before awaiting his death.

CIVILIAN AND MILITARY CLOTHING DURING THE MIDDLE AGES.

> BLACKSMITH

> BUTCHER

> TANNER

> FISHMONGER

> LOWER CLASS CITIZEN

> MIDDLE CLASS CITIZEN

> CAL PH

2
#B

THE RENAISSANCE

Renaissance, literally meaning "rebirth", is a term used by historians to describe a significant rejuvenation of cultural growth occurring throughout Europe from the late 13th century into the 17th century, marking the period between the end of the Middle Ages and the beginnings of the modern world. Most notable in Italy, the Renaissance was triggered by renewed interest in the ancient Greek and Roman cultures following the rediscovery of classical texts. This led to a transformation of European artwork, literature, science and philosophy.

The Renaissance effectively began in the Italian city of Florence, which alongside Venice was one of several republics flourishing amidst the collapse of the feudal system that had defined and sustained the medieval period. Excited commerce between merchants motivated the creation of official banking systems, reinforcing the wealth of prominent families that assumed leadership positions in their respective regions, such as the Houses of Medici in Florence and Tuscany and the House of Sforza in Milan. The rising nobility acted as patrons for an inspired generation of artists, including Michelangelo, Raphael, da Vinci, and other geniuses who forever revolutionized architecture, painting and sculpture. Scholars and explorers alike dove headfirst into the quest to unravel the mysteries of nature, and in doing so discovered the "New World", making impressive progress in technology as advancements in gunpowder placed firearms on battlefields and fireworks at urban festivals.

The scope of these changes to the course of Western civilization had a profound influence on both the landscape of society and the everyday human consciousness. The Papal monopoly on faith and authority was weakening as scientific and philosophical thinking challenged the legitimacy of traditional Christianity, igniting waves of heresy and reformation. As nation-states like England, Spain and France became the superpowers of their time, whispers of a similarly unified Italia crept into the streets of Italian city-states. Diverse organizations emerged to compete in the frenzy for dominance, recognition and glory as older power structures gave way to new ones, leaving an uncertain future vulnerable to the hopes and desires of ambitious men and women. Noble houses wrestled with one another using a new breed of mercenary, the *condottieri*, while disadvantaged courtesans and thieves left on society's periphery banded together to navigate a fertile underground culture. As the fires of reason and imagination raged in the European soul, the Renaissance presented an enriching and unstoppable crossroads between the past and the future.

CONSPIRACY

In 1476, the Assassin Giovanni Auditore tracked down and fought four men attempting to leave Florence by night, on the trail of dark rumors concerning a plot to overturn Medici power in the city. Though one fled, he killed two of them and brought the fourth to Lorenzo the Magnificent and Uberto Alberti, Florence's *Gonfaloniere* of Justice. Under torture, the man detailed a plan to assassinate Galeazzo Maria Sforza, Duke of Milan and ally of the Medici family. Giovanni headed for Milan and attended the Duke's procession into the *Basilica di Santo Stefano*

the High Mass of its namesake's feast, on the day the deadline of the impending assassination.

The Assassin entered in time to see Sforza stabbed to death by the nobleman Giovanni Andrea Lampugnani. The latter was then killed by a servant of the Duke in the ensuing fight between Sforza's guards and his accomplices. Looting Lampugnani's body for clues, Giovanni found a purse of Venetian ducats. Believing these might lead him to the murder's masterminds, the Assassin returned to Florence in preparation for his journey to Venice, not knowing that the man who had escaped him—the Templar leader Rodrigo Borgia—was already on the move.

Giovanni's hunt for the men behind the death of the Duke of Milan brought him to the city of Venice, where he broke into the *Palazzo Ducale* in search of answers. Once within its walls, he eavesdropped on a meeting between two of Venice's most powerful officials; the cousins Silvio and Marco Barbarigo, who were sending a courier to Rome with a crucial letter to be delivered to their master. The courier set off into the streets of Venice with great caution, and Giovanni trailed him from the rooftops before descending upon him in an empty alley. Giovanni's attack was at first deflected by the courier, forcing the two to fight briefly before Giovanni at last gained the upper hand. Unfortunately, his attempts to interrogate his prey were rendered useless when the courier took his own life, impaling himself on the Assassin's blade.

Giovanni searched the dead courier for the letter and returned to the *Palazzo della Signoria* in Florence, meeting with Lorenzo and Alberti to share his findings. The letter was encrypted, so Alberti arranged to have it deciphered by a monk in Lorenzo's service, Antonio Maffei. However, when the monk finished decoding the letter later that evening, Alberti demanded Maffei's secrecy and imposed a vow of silence on him regarding both the contents of the letter and its successful decryption.

Maffei went to the *Palazzo Auditore* to summon Giovanni, whose late departure caught the attention of his second eldest son, Ezio, who was unaware of his father's true profession. Giovanni reassured Ezio and instructed him to assist his older brother Federico in watching after the family in his absence. Maffei and Giovanni convened once again with Lorenzo

and Alberti, but the latter denied that the letter had been decoded and instead suggested that the only way to track down its intended recipient was to duplicate the letter and deliver it in Rome. Giovanni volunteered for the journey to Rome for the sake of the Medici and the continued security of Florence, promising to ensure that the letter reached its destination. Lorenzo accepted, charging him to destroy their mysterious enemies. Giovanni rode forth from Florence that very night.

Once the letter was delivered in Rome, Giovanni tracked its course until it reached its intended recipient: Rodrigo Borgia. After a confrontation during which Giovanni was wounded, allowing Rodrigo

the opportunity to escape, Giovanni returned to Florence, convinced that he had uncovered but a small part of a much larger, and dangerous, plot.

THE EXECUTION

After running errands for his father, Ezio returned to the *Palazzo* [illegible] one night only to find it in shambles and his father and brothers—Federico and Petruccio—nowhere to be seen. After avoiding an assault from the servant Annetta, who believed him to be a city guard, Ezio discovered that his father and brothers had been captured by Florentine guards and imprisoned in the *Palazzo della Signoria*. Everyone else in the house had been left alone and remained safe, including his sister Claudia and his mother Maria, though the later had apparently not spoken a word since the attack. Annetta offered to take the women to her sister's house, claiming they would be safe there. As the servant led Ezio's sister and mother to safety, he instead went to the *Palazzo* to speak to his father.

Once Ezio found the cell housing his father, he learned that Giovanni had known that an attack of some sort had been imminent, though he had not expected it to happen so soon. Giovanni

instructed Ezio to return home to recover a chest from a hidden location in his office. Ezio was told to take everything he found inside, even if some of the items seemed strange to him. Furthermore, Giovanni tasked his son to deliver a letter and some documents also found within the chest to Uberto Alberti, a friend of his.

Ezio returned to the Auditore home and followed his father's instructions, using Eagle Vision—a form of sixth sense—to locate a hidden door. In the chest behind it he found a set of robes, a sword, a broken hidden blade, an ancient piece of paper, as well as the letter and documents meant for Uberto. As he left the house Ezio was attacked by two guards, but defeating them. He then wasted no time finding Uberto Alberti.

Uberto was surprised to see the young Auditore. When asked what was wrong, Ezio relayed the night's events to the *Gonfaloniere* and gave him his father's documents. Uberto confirmed that they contained evidence of a conspiracy against the Auditore family, and would hopefully be enough to save his father and brothers at the trial tomorrow.

During the trial, however, Uberto claimed to be unaware of any evidence to argue their case and the Auditores were sentenced to death for treason. Though Ezio tried to reach them in time, he failed—his father and brothers were hung and he was forced to flee.

EZIO'S REVENGE

In the aftermath of the executions, Ezio returned to Florence to speak to Cristina Vespucci, with whom he was romantically involved, and informed her of what had happened. Seeing his distress, Cristina agreed to help Ezio locate the bodies of his father and brothers, and ensured they received a proper burial. Afterwards, Ezio asked Cristina to accompany him, but she declined to follow him in exile.

Ezio then departed, traveling to *La Rosa Colta*, the home of Annetta's sister, Paola, where his mother and sister were in hiding. When Paola, leader of the Florentine courtesans, learned of Ezio's plans to exact revenge upon Uberto Alberti she offered her assistance. With great efficiency, she proceeded to teach him how to move unnoticed through a crowd, how to hide in plain sight, and how to pickpocket.

Once Ezio's training was complete, Paola insisted that the only thing left was to find a suitable weapon. The courtesan produced the blade Ezio had taken from the chest in his father's office and recommended that he saw Leonardo da Vinci, to fix the broken weapon. With the help of the Codex page, which was also part of Giovanni's possessions, Leonardo was able not only to fix the blade but even modify it so that it was usable without removing the ring finger of the wearer. Just as Ezio was about to leave, a guard appeared at the door looking for information about the remaining members of the Auditore family. When the artist denied any knowledge the guard began to beat him for answers, prompting Ezio to come to the aid of his friend, and kill the guard with his new weapon. Once Leonardo was safe, Ezio departed.

To help Ezio in his quest, Paola pointed him in the direction of the *Basilica di Santa Croce* where Verrocchio was unveiling his latest work. The guards were on high alert all around the city, forcing Ezio to use his new skills to reach the basilica without attracting attention. When he arrived at the courtyard, he overheard a conversation between Lorenzo de' Medici and Uberto Alberti regarding the latter's betrayal of the Auditore family as well as his dealings with the Pazzis, enemies of the Medicis—and part of a greater plot to take over Florence. Ezio snuck into the building and approached Uberto, assassinating the man before he could call for help.

MONTERIGGIONI

Ezio then left Paola and the courtesans in order to take his mother and sister to Monteriggioni, in Tuscany, where his uncle, the *condottiero* Mario Auditore, lived. On the road towards the city they were ambushed by Vieri de' Pazzi—a long time rival of Ezio's—and his men. Ezio did his best to fight off their attackers, but all were saved when his uncle Mario joined the fight with his own men, forcing Vieri to flee. After escorting them to the Villa Auditore, Mario insisted that Ezio stayed and

…arned to fight so he would be able to properly pro-…t his family. Eventually Ezio saw the wisdom of …s and agreed to let Mario train him.

…ario spent the next two years training Ezio. At …e same time he taught him about his father's true …rk within the Assassin Brotherhood and their …ruggle against the Templars. In doing so, Mario …d hoped to convince Ezio to stay and follow in …r father's footsteps: finding the Codex pages and …t against their enemies. Ezio was determined to …e found out about the trouble Vieri had been …ing Mario and the people of Monteriggioni. He …learned that Mario had departed with his men …San Gimignano to finish off Vieri de' Pazzi once …r all. Ezio followed him.

SAN GIMIGNANO

…located his uncle and offered his help. Though …o suspected the troubles stemmed more from …act that they were Assassins and Vieri a Templar, …nonetheless graciously accepted Ezio's offer of assistance. With the city sealed off, Ezio was tasked with finding a way beyond the defensive walls, taking out any archers guarding the entrance and opening the gates to let Mario's forces in.

Once inside the city, Mario's mercenaries split up to take care of Vieri's men patrolling the streets. When they regrouped, Ezio went ahead of the others in order to take care of Vieri while his uncle and his men dispatched the guards. As Ezio reached the gate at the other side of the city he witnessed a meeting of the conspirators as a man called the Spaniard gave the Pazzis their orders for the next leg of the plot. As the meeting ended, soldiers arrived to warn Vieri of the attack on the city and the youngest Pazzi rushed off to join the fight.

After chasing Vieri to the top of a tower on the battlements surrounding the city, Ezio managed to assassinate him. As they left San Gimignano Ezio's will to stop the enemies of his family had only increased—he determined that he would use his father's list to take down the Templars.

> SAN GIMIGNAN…

CIVILIAN AND MILITARY CLOTHING DURING THE RENAISSANCE

> SOLDIER WITH ARQUEBUS

> SOLDIER WITH HALBERD

> SOLDIER

> SOLDIER WITH CROSSBOW

> SOLDIER WITH ARQUEBUS

> PAPAL GUARD

> SWORDSMAN

> MERCHANTS–VENICE

> ARTISTS–FLORENCE

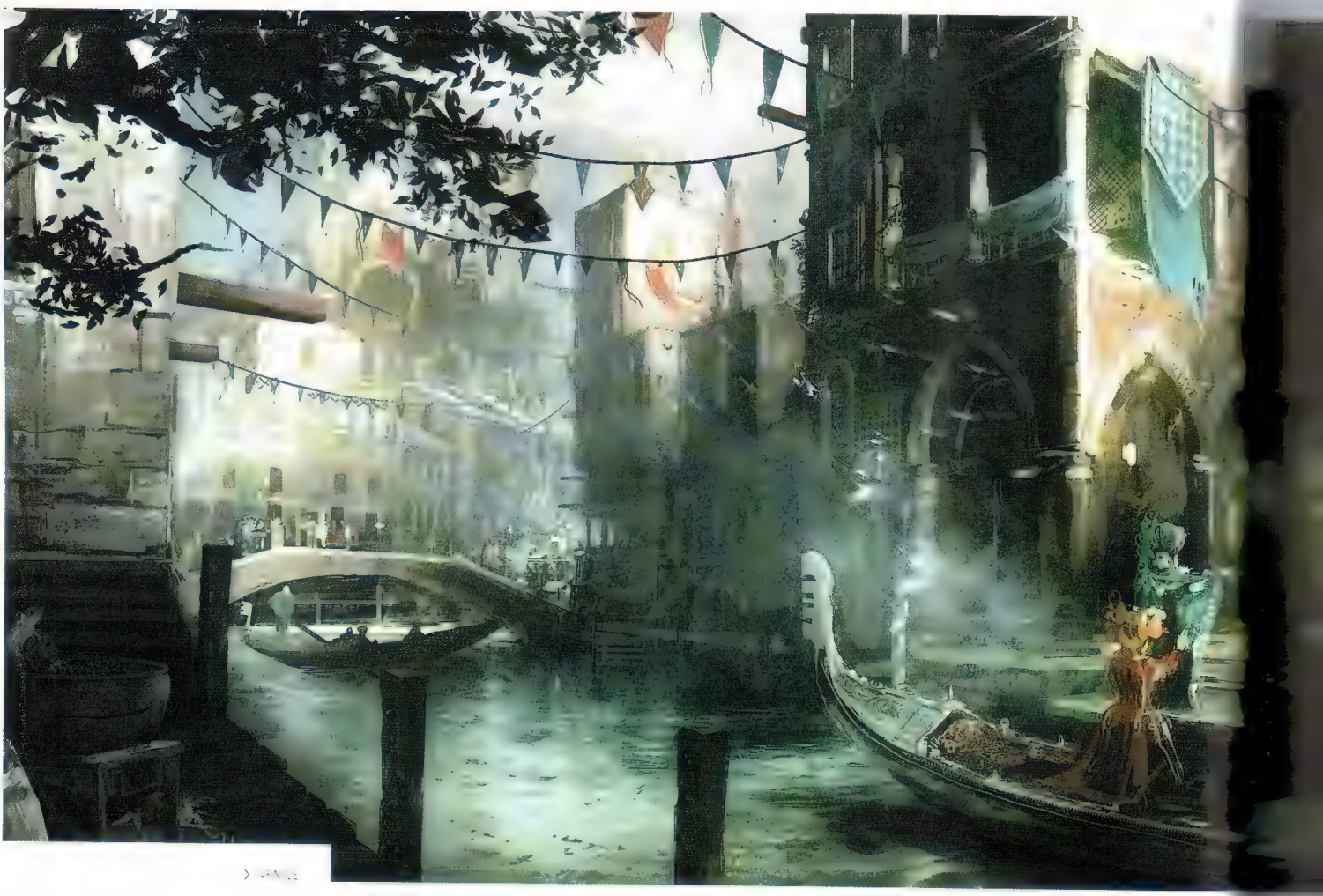
> PEASANTS–TUSCANY

> PEASANTS–TUSCANY

> ANY

> BLACKSMITH

> TAILOR



> VENICE

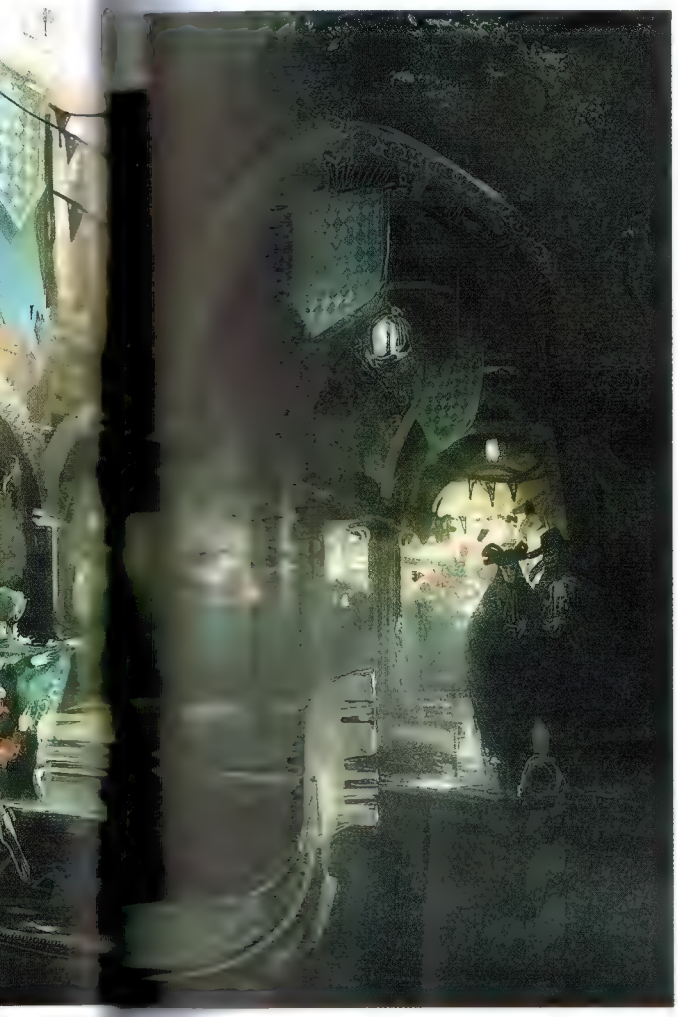
THE PAZZI CONSPIRACY

Ezio returned to Florence, arriving in time to witness a meeting of the conspirators. The Spaniard—Rodrigo Borgia—confirmed that they had Pope Sixtus IV's blessing, while Francesco de' Pazzi affirmed that they had an attack planned at the *Duomo*. Not long after, Francesco and another conspirator carried out their attack, managing to severely wound Lorenzo de' Medici and kill his brother Giuliano, despite Ezio's interference with their plans. After ensuring Lorenzo's safety, Ezio went off in search of the conspirators. As a battle raged outside the *Palazzo della Signoria*, Francesco attempted to escape with Ezio in close pursuit. After a lengthy chase, he was caught and dispatched. Jacopo de' Pazzi, knowing that the plan was beyond salvaging, elected to flee the city.

Later, Lorenzo gave Ezio the names of the other conspirators: Antonio Maffei, Francesco Salviati Riario, Bernardo Baroncelli, and Stefano da Bagnone. With this information, Ezio began a hunt for the remaining members, hoping that they would point him in the direction of Jacopo.

Antonio Maffei, the Town Crier, was found in San Gimignano, preaching to the citizens there about the evils of the Medici family. He was killed by Ezio at the top of the highest tower in the city, despite having surrounded himself with archers.

In 1479 Ezio caught up with Francesco Salviati, the Archbishop of Pisa, sequestered away in a villa in Tuscany. With the help of some of his uncle's men, Ezio was able to infiltrate the villa and assassinate Salviati. The Archbishop did not give any information regarding Jacopo's location, but at least confirmed that he only came out of hiding to meet with other Templars.



ling with Salviati, Ezio returned to San
o to track down Bernardo Baroncelli,
e eventually caught and killed. With his last
Baroncelli informed Ezio that, when sum-
the Templars always met at the church.

ntually located Stefano da Bagnone in an
Tuscany. He attempted to hide among the
there to elude Ezio, but the young Auditore
less found and killed him in front of the
nks. Before he died, Stefano gave him the
ece of information needed to track down
that the Templars met in the shadow of the
ods. After he died, Ezio retrieved a let-
aining the date of the next meeting before
g to San Gimignano.

ght of the meeting, Ezio trailed Jacopo to
Teatro Romano, where Rodrigo Borgia
his displeasure with the execution of the
rs' plans and stabbed Jacopo for his failure to perform to expectations. Having realized Ezio was present, Rodrigo Borgia instructed his guards to kill the interloper before departing. After fighting off the guards, Ezio ended Jacopo's suffering.

With the Medici power safe once again, Ezio returned to Florence.

THE VENETIAN CONSPIRACY

Having learned that the Templars' influence was not limited to Florence, but had also spread elsewhere, Ezio decided to go to Venice—home of one of the conspirators. On his way, he met his friend Leonardo da Vinci in the Apennine Mountains and briefly journeyed with him to Forlì—where they aided Caterina Sforza—before reaching their destination.

During their initial tour of the city, Ezio and Leonardo heard rumors that Emilio Barbarigo, a rich merchant residing at the *Palazzo della Setta*, was oppressing Venice's citizens. After the tour, Leonardo settled in, saying that the door to his workshop was always opened to Ezio, should he require his assistance. The young Auditore then began investigating the *Palazzo*. As he observed the place, he saw a group of men in rags distracting guards while a young woman—Rosa, who had bumped into him earlier that day—began to climb the walls, jumping incredibly large gaps at a time. She never reached her destination, however, as an archer shot her in the thigh, forcing her to retreat.

Ezio helped Rosa reach the gondola where her friends were waiting, then neutralized several guards as it made its way through the Venetian canals. At the headquarters of the Venetian thieves, Antonio—an Assassin and the leader of the guild—revealed to Ezio that he knew of his work against the Templars. He explained that his group sought to take down Emilio Barbarigo. Ezio agreed to help them, performing several tasks for Antonio, meanwhile learning new tricks from them.

In 1485, Antonio was ready to initiate his plan to take over the *Palazzo*. During the mission, Ezio eavesdropped on a conversation between Emilio Barbarigo and another man—who, he later learned, was Carlo Grimaldi, a member of the Council of Ten. Ezio killed Emilio and eventually staked Grimaldi, whom he found talking to Silvio Barbarigo—the state inquisitor of Venice. He learned that

Grimaldi had been trying to gain the trust of Doge Mocenigo, whom the Templars were planning to kill. Grimaldi also met with Marco Barbarigo, Silvio's cousin, and Dante Moro, his personal bodyguard, to discuss their plot against the doge.

In order to enter the *Palazzo Ducale*, Ezio went to Leonardo for the use of his flying machine. After a disastrous initial run, Leonardo found a way to make his machine work, using hot air currents. Ezio then arranged for Antonio's thieves to build bonfires throughout Venice, so as to create a route to the *Palazzo* for Leonardo's machine. Once inside, Ezio killed Grimaldi, but not before the latter had successfully poisoned the doge. In a delusional state caused by the poison, Doge Giovanni Mocenigo accused Ezio of murdering him, forcing the young man to flee the city.

A year later, Ezio returned to Venice and gave Leonardo a Codex page he had taken from Grimaldi, which contained the schematics for a hidden pistol. After arming Ezio with the new weapon, Leonardo sent him to Teodora Contanto, leader of the Venetian courtesans. The latter informed him that if he won a series of contests at the *Carnivale*, he would be given a golden mask—and an opportunity to meet with the new doge, the Templar Marco Barbarigo. Despite his best efforts, Ezio lost to Dante Moro—because the contest had been fixed. With the assistance of Teodora's courtesans,

stole the golden mask from Dante, allowing him to approach Doge Marco Barbarigo and kill him with a shot from his hidden pistol.

Some time later, Ezio met the *condottiero* Bartolomeo Veniano and helped him rescue some of his men. Afterwards, Bartolomeo proposed to Ezio to use his mercenaries to cause mayhem throughout the city in order to lure Silvio Barbarigo's men out of *L'Arsenale*, Venice's Templar-controlled shipyard. With their help, Ezio was able to kill both Silvio and Dante—the last of the Templars who had conspired to kill Doge Marco Barbarigo. However, Ezio learned that the plot against the Doge had been but a distraction to ensure that the Templar ship bound to Cyprus would set sail safely.

INDUCTION INTO THE BROTHERHOOD

In 1488, Rosa presented Ezio with a birthday gift: the shipping manifest of *L'Arsenale*, from the day the Templar ship had left. This vessel was now due to return, and Ezio believed that with it the Templars had brought an Apple of Eden—a powerful artifact—to Venice. After spying on *L'Arsenale*, Ezio neutralized a courier and took his place in order to approach the Templar leader, Rodrigo Borgia. A fight ensued and, to Ezio's surprise, his uncle Mario,

a thief called La Volpe, Antonio, as well as Bartolomeo arrived with their men to assist him. Rodrigo fled, but Ezio and his allies successfully recovered the Apple.

With the arrival of Paola and Niccolò Machiavelli, Ezio was officially inducted into the Assassin Brotherhood.

BATTLE OF FORLÌ

The Battle of Forlì, which took place in 1488, in the city of Forlì, Romagna, was an altercation between the nobles Checco and Ludovico Orsi and the Assassins. The Orsi brothers, who had been hired by the Templars, attacked the city to retrieve a map made by Girolamo Riario, deceased husband of Caterina Sforza, Countess of Forlì. This map pinpointed the locations of the Codex pages scattered throughout Italy, which would lead to First Civilization Vaults.

The defenders, led by the Assassins Ezio Auditore de Firenze and Niccolò Machiavelli, managed to hold the citadel of Forlì, but the Orsi brothers took the children of Countess Caterina hostage. They came forward and, in exchange of the children's lives, demanded the map of the Codex as well as the Apple of Eden that Ezio had brought with him to the city. Refusing to fall for such threat, Ezio snuck out of the besieged city to save Caterina's children, killing Ludovico Orsi in the process. While Ezio was gone, however, Checco Orsi stormed the city and took the Apple from Machiavelli and Caterina.

Pursuing Checco, Ezio fought his way out of the city and into the mountains where he eventually assassinated him. Ezio recovered

e Apple, but Checco had managed to stab him in the abdomen before he died. As he began to lose consciousness, Ezio saw a monk ressed in a black robe stoop over him to steal the Apple. This nk was Girolamo Savonarola.

ursed back to health by Caterina, Ezio awoke some time later. e city was safe and Caterina Sforza remained in control of her d, but the Apple had been lost. As a show of gratitude, Caterina e Ezio the map of the Codex pages.

SPAIN

extensive history investigating the Pieces of Eden ensured that Templars were well aware of the New World by the time the Italian explorer Christoffa Corombo began planning his voyage across the Atlantic. By orders of their leader, Rodrigo Borgia, the Templars were already prolonging the Spanish war between Christians and Muslim "Moors" to prevent Queen Isabella I from funding such voyages, allowing Rodrigo to lure Christoffa to Venice with the prospect of financial support. Luis de Santángel, an Assassin and friend of the explorer, had been warned about the meeting and knew of Rodrigo's desire to keep the New World a Templar secret. Santángel accompanied Christoffa to Venice and asked the leader of the local thieves' guild, the Assassin Antonio, for help Antonio in turn called upon the services of Ezio Auditore.

Ezio reached Christoffa in time to save him from a Templar ambush, and learned from Santángel that the Spanish Assassins

Guild had been arrested as part of the recent Spanish Inquisition, led by Tomás de Torquemada. He left for Barcelona to aid his brethren, eventually meeting the Assassin Raphael Sanchez, who handed him the name of Gaspar Martinez as the inquisitor behind the arrests. After Ezio killed Martinez, he and Sanchez visited Zaragoza in the Kingdom of Aragon to free the imprisoned Assassins and interrogate the local inquisitor, Pedro Llorente, who helped Ezio realize that Rodrigo Borgia was using the Inquisition to snuff out Spanish Assassins.

The Assassins left for Grenada, the last Moorish resistance in Spain, to put an end to the Templar presence there. In Grenada, Ezio infiltrated the Alhambra Palace and freed the Moorish King, Muhammad XII, from his captors and successfully advised him to make peace with Queen Isabella, ending the Templar-driven war. Torquemada sent the inquisitor Juan de Marillo into Grenada to imprison its "heretics", but Ezio put an end to him as well. As Queen Isabella entertained the idea of supporting Christoffa, the Templars attempted to lure the explorer away with false news of the French king's willingness to sponsor him, forcing Ezio to defend the explorer yet again.

With the war effectively over, Queen Isabella agreed to help Santángel fund Christoffa's voyage. As an act of final retribution from the Templars, Torquemada ordered for the arrest of both Santángel and Sanchez. Ezio protected his allies from imprisonment before hunting down Torquemada himself, tired of the Inquisition's assault on the Assassins. Torquemada escaped him after a brief confrontation, but Ezio decided against pursuit, believing that Torquemada was only an ignorant pawn of the Templars whose death would have only worsened the situation. Now that Christoffa had at last set sail for the west—not yet knowing he would stumble upon the New World—Ezio returned to Italy while the Spanish Assassins prepared to defend themselves against the ongoing Inquisition.

BONFIRE OF THE VANITIES

In 1497, Girolamo Savonarola took over Florence using the Apple of Eden he had taken from an injured Ezio Auditore in the aftermath of the Battle of Forlì, winning the allegiance of powerful citizens who spearheaded his program to purify Florence by destroying all traces of Renaissance profanity. As Savonarola's agents fed all artwork and literature into the fires, calling out for repentance and tightening their grip on the city, Ezio arrived on the trail of the Apple and learned of the situation from his comrade Niccolò Machiavelli. Together with Paola and La Volpe, the leaders of the courtesans and thieves in the Florentine underground, they orchestrated an uprising against Savonarola, while Ezio put an end to his chief lieutenants. Provoked by the Assassins, a mob attacked Savonarola's estate and dragged him away to be executed. During the ensuing chaos, the monk dropped the Apple, which was promptly retrieved by Ezio. However, as Savonarola burned at the stake in the *Piazza della Signoria*, Ezio came and killed him prematurely to save him from suffering. He then spoke to the gathered people of Florence and exhorted them to cherish their freedoms and choose their own paths before reuniting with the Assassins.

THE VAULT

In 1499, the Apple and Staff of Eden were brought together in Rome, unlocking a First Civilization Vault sealed beneath the Vatican. A critical juncture in the histories of both the Assassin Brotherhood and the Templar Order, the confrontation in the Vatican was the inevitable consequence of mutual warfare between both factions, and led to the discovery of Minerva, one of humanity's ancient pro-

tors. Rodrigo Borgia's machinations across Italy ng the 15th century constituted a grand strategy ecure the Pieces of Eden required for entry into ault, which he believed housed God made phys- manifest. Trusting himself to be the legendary phet for whom the Vault would yield its secrets, rigo bought his way into the Papal office and red the Staff of Eden.

The Apple, however, had fallen into the hands of the Assassin Brotherhood, who had retrieved it wing its theft by Girolamo Savonarola. The herhood began to understand the function and nificance of the Apple the following year, after essfully collecting and deciphering the Codex of r Ibn-La'Ahad, which described a Vault hidden ath the Vatican.

The incident at the Vatican was a meeting point of inevitably convergent paths: Rodrigo Borgia, desired access to the Vault and the power con- ed within, and the Assassin Brotherhood, who ent to keep the Borgias' power in check. That Ezio Auditore infiltrated the Vatican with the ple of Eden in hand. He confronted and defeated rigo Borgia, and used the combined power of and Apple to enter the Vault. However, the did not, as the Templars had believed, contain dy of God, but a message from a member of rst Civilization named Minerva.

Minerva's message spoke of the origins of human- rom their creation by the race of the First Civilization—known as Those Who Came Before—to their eventual rebellion. She spoke not to Ezio, but *through* him, her words imprinted into his memory, to be extracted centuries later by Ezio's descendant and intended recipient, Desmond Miles. Minerva's warning of an impending catastrophe and her cryptic descriptions of the First Civilization were largely incomprehensible to the Brotherhood. The significance of her words would not be realized until centuries later, when Desmond Miles entered the Animus and relived the incident beneath the Vatican.

FALL OF MONTERIGGIONI

Monteriggioni, stronghold of the Brotherhood in Italy and ancestral home to the Auditore family, fell to the combined forces of Cesare Borgia—son of Rodrigo Borgia and general of the Papal Armies—and French soldiers lead by Baron Octavian de Valois, in January of 1500. The attack scattered the Brotherhood into hiding and illustrated the power held by Cesare at its zenith.

Well armed and well paid, Cesare's forces were built on the coffers of the Borgia family and equipped with advanced weaponry, including siege equipment and firearms—originally designed by Leonardo da Vinci, unwillingly in the employ of the Borgias. With the support of Baron de Valois, Cesare mobilized in secret and surrounded the walls of Monteriggioni. Having both an advantage in numbers and the element of surprise on their side, the odds were decisively in favor of Cesare's forces. The attack began in earnest with a barrage of cannon fire.

By the time the Assassins mobilized a defense, the Borgia forces had already penetrated the city's gates. The walls of Monteriggioni were lightly manned and armed with cannons—insufficient to halt the advance despite Ezio Auditore's best efforts, but enough to buy time to evacuate Monteriggioni's citizens. Consequently, the Assassins focused their efforts on evacuation, fighting a retreating battle through a city they were forced to relinquish.

Cesare's motivations for attacking Monteriggioni were nuanced. An element of family vendetta certainly played a role in the attack, to which end the siege of Monteriggioni represented reprisal for the humiliation of the Borgias at the hands of the Assassins. The attack, however, was largely Cesare's own stratagem. It was also conducted without the consent of his father Rodrigo, who—following his confrontation with Ezio Auditore—had taken to avoiding open aggression against the Assassins.

Regardless of Cesare's motivations, the siege of Monteriggioni yielded a rare and coveted prize for the Borgias: the Apple of Eden, sought by the Templars for decades, and left in the care of the Assassins. By the end of the battle, Cesare's forces had demolished the city and sent the few surviving Assassins into hiding, a clear military victory. Cesare executed

the Brotherhood's leader, Mario Auditore, and seized the Apple for himself. Furthermore, he had fortuitously captured one of their old enemies during the attack, Caterina Sforza.

Nonetheless, the core leadership of the Brotherhood survived, escaping along with much of the populace through a series of passages concealed beneath the Villa Auditore. The loss of Monteriggioni dealt a severe blow to the Assassins, however. Despite the heavy losses, they relocated to Rome to continue their fight.

ROME

By early 1500, the Templars controlled most of Rome, which had entered a period of cultural and economic decline. Rodrigo Borgia occupied the Apostolic Palace—having been named Pope in 1492, under the name Alexander VI—while Borgia guards patrolled the streets. The Assassins recognized signs of growing dissatisfaction among the city's populace and began a campaign to replenish their ranks. The liberation of Rome, catalyzed by the Brotherhood, would lift the Assassins back into a position of prominence over the course of the following three years.

The first step, however, required the creation of a solid foothold within Rome, from which the Assassins could operate effectively, and in secrecy. The Brotherhood began aggressively consolidating its power, beginning with an alliance with the Orsini family, led by the *condottiero* Fabio Orsini, ally of the Assassins and associate of Bartolomeo d'Alviano. The Orsini family, chafing under their servitude of the Borgias, welcomed the opportunity to fight against Cesare, and Fabio provided his allies with a base of operations on Tiber Island.

Tiber Island gave the Assassins a sense of permanence in the city. However, the campaign to rid Rome of the Borgias required the infiltration of every strata of society. As in Venice and Florence, the Assassins began to create an infrastructure of intelligence across the city, beginning with the renovation of *La Volpe Addormentata* («The Sleeping Fox»), an inn which doubled as a base for the Assassin-sponsored Thieves Guild, as well as the *Rosa in Fiore* («The Blooming Rose»), one of Rome's most popular brothel. Finally, with Bartolomeo's mercenary quartered in barracks in the Campagna District—the *Caserma di Alviano*—the Brotherhood had managed to place its agents in key locations across Rome.

The Assassins spent one year rebuilding the Brotherhood's intelligence network and slowly gathering power. In 1501, they decided to make an attempt at the lives of Rodrigo and Cesare Borgia, while simultaneously trying to free their ally, Caterina Sforza, from captivity within the *Castel Sant'Angelo*. Fortuitously, Rodrigo Borgia was away from the city at the time, and Cesare had departed the *Castel* just before the Assassins could act. The infiltration was nonetheless a partial success, as Ezio rescued Caterina Sforza and brought her to the relative safety of Tiber Island.

However, the rise of the Brotherhood in Rome was as much a social project as it was an act of subterfuge against the Borgias. In 1501, centered on Tiber Island and with cells across the city, the Brotherhood began a campaign of recruiting from the populace, steadily eroding the power of the Borgias while swelling their own ranks with young members eager to liberate Rome and serve the cause of the Assassins.

BORGIA ARSENALS

In 1499, the inventor and artist Leonardo da Vinci was forcibly conscripted into the service of the Borgia family, providing them with his technical expertise and an array of ingenious new weapons. Over the coming years, owing largely to the new firearm technology developed by Leonardo, the Borgias were able to secure their control over Rome and the Italian peninsula. Leonardo, secretly an ally of the Assassin Brotherhood, continued to work against his captors and provided the locations of four Borgia arsenals to his close friend, Ezio Auditore.

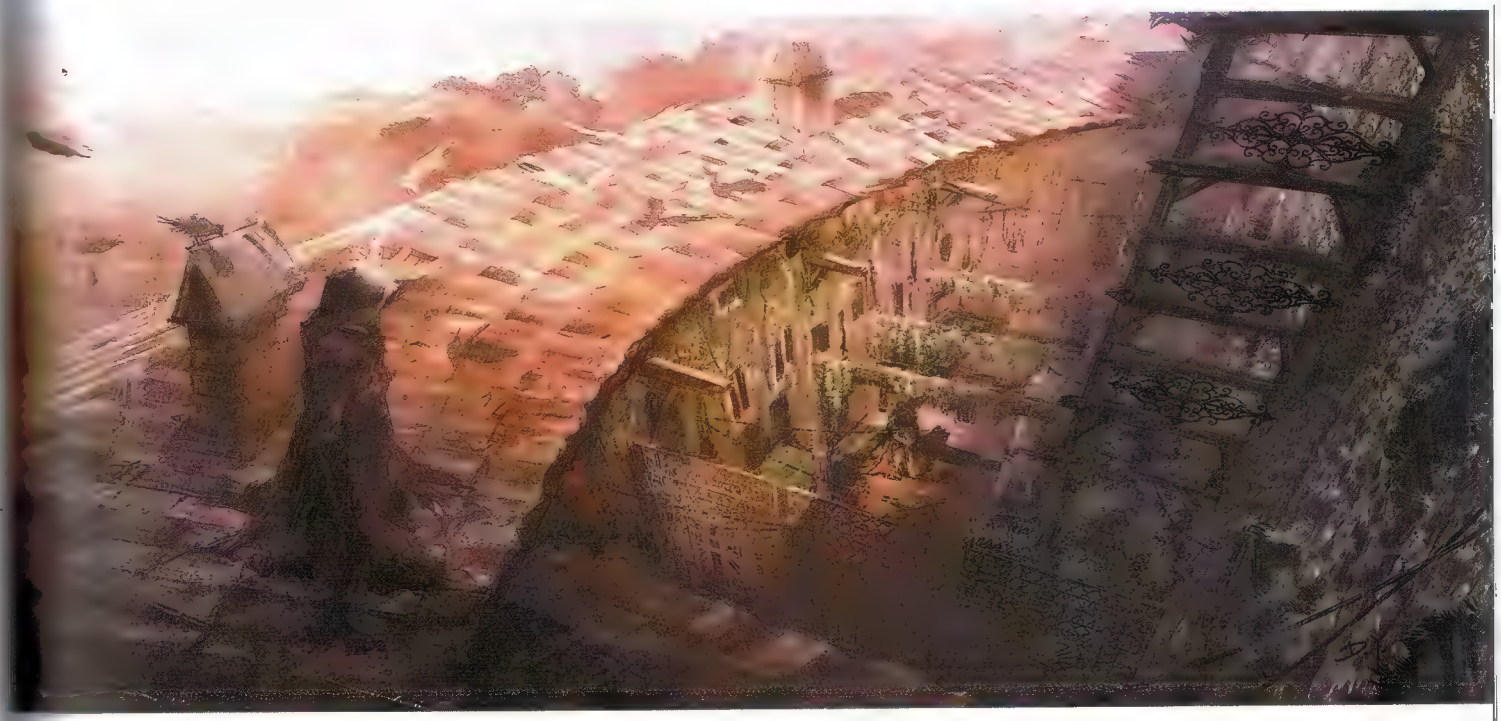
An arsenal in the foothills of Colli Albani housed one of the earliest prototypes of a mounted machine gun, the likes of which would not be reproduced until the 19th century. Additional arsenals included a workshop in Valnerina used to mass produce an early hang glider, an incendiary cannon developed in the ports of Naples, and armored siege weaponry reminiscent of an early tank designed in a Borgia settlement at Monte Circeo.

With the locations of these workshops in hand, Ezio successfully sabotaged their production, crippling the Borgias' technological superiority and halting the development of similar machinery for centuries. The destruction of Leonardo's war machines was instrumental in a long campaign to undermine Borgia power, and helped loosen their control over Leonardo himself.

THE COPERNICUS CONSPIRACY

In 1500, the Prussian scholar Niccolò Copernico visited the Papal court of Rodrigo Borgia in Rome to study astronomy at the Vatican. Most of his scholarly peers had adhered to an understanding of the universe put forth by the Greek philosopher Ptolemy, one that acknowledged that the Earth was at the center of the universe. The Knights Templar reinforced this doctrine, which created a dilemma when Copernico's research began to illustrate that the Earth was one of many planets actually revolving around the sun. His work became even more dangerous to the Templar cause when he began to share his scientific insights with Roman citizens, threatening the Ptolemaic model of the universe that had been authorized and taught. Copernico's alliance with the Templars collapsed with his conviction that enlightenment and truth must be shared among all, rather than hoarded by the elite few, thereby endangering the monopoly of power held by the Order. His treachery earned the particular wrath of the Vatican's Master of the Sacred Palace, a Dominican entrusted by the Vatican court to guarantee conformity within the field of religious philosophy.

Copernico did not have much time to discuss his ideas with a curious Roman audience before guards were sent to kill him and his fellow scholars. Fortunately for him, both his unconventional teachings and the guards prepared to descend upon him caught the attention of Ezio Auditore, who saw to his protection. Copernico entrusted a number of letters to Ezio to be sent to his comrade scholars, who went into hiding at once upon receiving them. Ezio's continued elimination of the Vatican forces did not stop the Templars from sending more guards to destroy Copernico and his contemporaries.



The night of an eclipse brought the crisis to a head, with Ezio tracking and killing the Master, who had sent another regiment of soldiers to end the life of the astronomer, when he boldly chose to come out of hiding in order to observe the eclipse. Ezio managed to break the final attack, leaving the Assassin and the astronomer to enjoy the eclipse as it burned in the Roman sky. They parted ways with respect for one another, Copernico leaving to continue seeking after the truth while Ezio returned to his campaign against the Templars.

INFILTRATION

By 1503, the Brotherhood had established itself within the city of Rome, its numbers replenished following an aggressive recruitment campaign. However, the liberation of Rome required, in the Brotherhood's eyes, uprooting the Borgia family from their seat of power. This task remained dangerous so long as Cesare had access to steady funding from the Papal coffers and the military support of his French allies under Baron de Valois. The Brotherhood set about eliminating these two sources in an effort to weaken Cesare, thus leaving him vulnerable to a direct attack.

The Borgias had taken care to conceal the source and direction of their funding, but the Assassins had a potential lead in Egidio Troche, an elderly Roman senator in debt with the family. In exchange for clearing him of his debts, Senator Troche aided the Brotherhood in tracking down the Borgias' banker: Juan Borgia the Elder, nephew of Rodrigo Borgia, a cardinal infamous for his debauchery. The Assassins killed Juan during one of his orgies. The banker's death startled an already weary Rodrigo Borgia who, in keeping with the Brotherhood's plans, redirected Cesare's funds to his own banker, Agostino Chigi.

With Cesare's funding crippled, the Assassins set their sights on sundering his alliance with the French aristocrat and commander, Baron Octavian de Valois. The support of the Baron had been critical in Cesare's rise to power; indeed, French troops had reinforced Cesare during the siege of Monteriggioni, and their alliance allowed the Borgias to continue strong-arming Italian politics.

Following the death of Juan, Octavian marched towards Rome's Campagna District to strike a blow against *condottiero* Bartolomeo d'Alviano, the military arm of the Assassins. Bartolomeo's forces fell back to superior French numbers, but after a successful ruse by Ezio and his allies, the Assassins infiltrated and captured the French camp, killing Octavian.

Meanwhile, the Borgias had grown increasingly wary of the Assassin threat. The death of Octavian caused

MORTI DI VIVO
50 000 f
MORTI DI VIVO
50 000
50 000 f

them to go on the defensive and fortify themselves within the *Castel Sant'Angelo*. However, the Assassins soon learned that one of Lucrezia Borgia's lovers, an actor named Pietro Rossi, possessed a key to the interior of the *Castel*. Owing to his relationship with Lucrezia, Pietro had earned the jealousy of Cesare, who sent his agent Micheletto Corella after him. The Assassins rescued Pietro from his killer and retrieved the key to *Sant'Angelo*.

FALL OF CESARE BORGIA

1503 saw the downfall of Borgia rule, perpetrated over the years by the Assassin Brotherhood. Cesare Borgia, general of the Papal forces, had lost much of his military influence following the death of his French ally, Octavian de Valois. Furthermore, fearing his son's reckless aggression, Rodrigo Borgia appropriated Cesare's funds to his own banker. With his troops dispersed and his funding cut off, Cesare made for the *Castel Sant'Angelo* to confront his father and seize the Apple of Eden. Their confrontation marked the beginning of Cesare Borgia's fall from grace, and the gradual dissolution of the Borgia family.

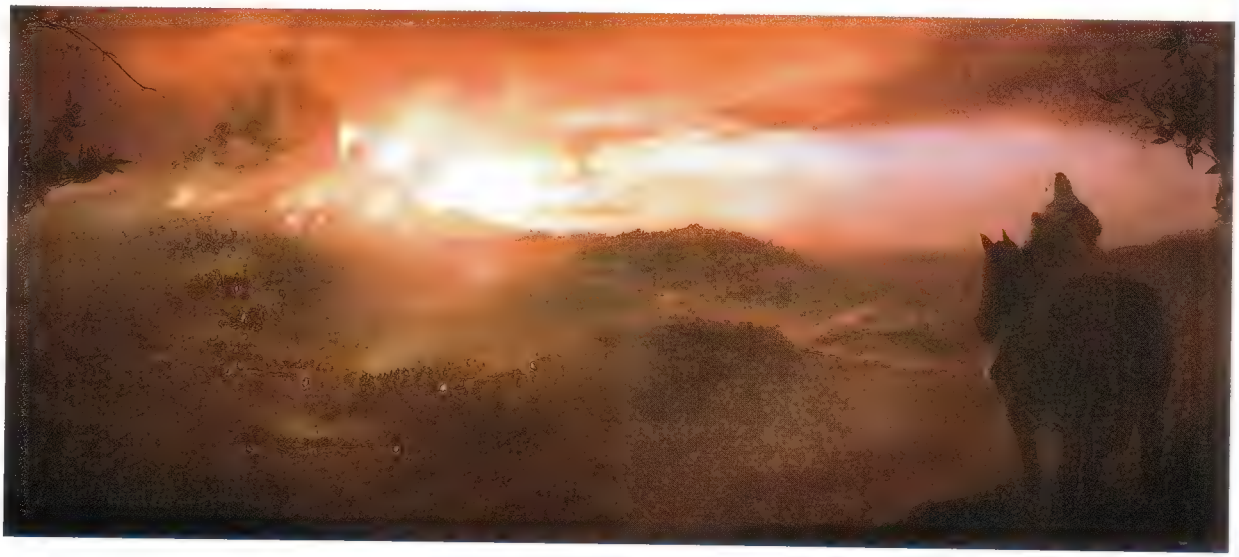
In a desperate bid to reclaim his waning power, Cesare killed his father Rodrigo—the latter having earlier tried to poison him. The Brotherhood had infiltrated the *Castel*, however, and intercepted the Apple of Eden before Cesare. Without the Apple, Cesare's options were limited; he soon discovered his influence over the Curia vanishing when the College of Cardinals refused to elect a Borgia puppet as the interim Pope.

The Cardinals instead elected the aging Pius III who, along with his successor Julius II, took aggressive measures to reverse the effects of Borgia rule, beginning by a Papal decree for the arrest of Cesare. When Cesare, in a final act of desperation, attempted to march his limited troops through the *Castra Praetoria*, he was met with the forces of the Assassin Fabio Orsini, who arrested Cesare on behalf of the new Pope.

THE TEMPLE OF PYTHAGORAS

Inspired by his exposure to the Apple of Eden in 1503, Leonardo da Vinci entertained a period of intensive research on the ancient Greek mathematician Pythagoras, and in so doing located the legendary Temple of Pythagoras in Rome. The secret society supporting his studies, the Cult of Hermes, kidnapped him, convinced that the Temple housed a perfect number which could change human nature.

Leonardo's abduction was discovered by Ezio Auditore. The Assassin learned from Leonardo's assistant, Salaì, that he had designed an invisible map to the Temple on several of his paintings, so Ezio raced against the Hermeticists to track down the scattered artworks. He reached the Temple in time to save Leonardo and dismantle the entire cult. Leonardo insisted on destroying the powerful, fabled number, so the two friends journeyed through the ancient Temple until they found another Vault built



Those Who Came before. Ezio understood that the coordinates preserved by the Vault were not meant for them: so they departed empty-handed.

VIANA

With Rodrigo Borgia dead and his son Cesare imprisoned within the *Castel Sant'Angelo*, the era of Borgia dominance seemed to have come to an end. Cesare's ambitions, however, proved difficult to subdue; from imprisonment, Cesare, with the aid of a few remaining loyalists and his right-hand, Micheletto Corella, had begun masterminding his return to power.

Following an escape from the *Castel Sant'Angelo*, Cesare was relocated to the *Castillo de la Mota* in Spain. In 1506, he broke free with the aid of Micheletto Corella. The Borgia family had its roots in Spain, and Cesare was quick to begin consolidating his limited power, allying himself with his brother-in-law, King John III of Navarre. The combined forces of Navarrese troops and Borgia mercenaries challenged the authority of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, and in March of 1507, Cesare stormed into the town of Viana, then a Spanish holding.

Seizing Viana would have provided Cesare with sufficient momentum to march against Ferdinand and Isabella. His ambitions, however, were never realized; Ezio Auditore, who had been chasing Cesare since his relocation from Rome, killed him during the siege. Viana was the Borgias' last gambit and the family's influence died with Cesare.

ALTAÏR'S LIBRARY

Four years after defeating the Borgias, Ezio traveled to Masyaf on a personal quest for wisdom. When

he arrived, he was surprised by the presence of a group of Byzantine Templars in the former Assassin stronghold, and was captured. As they prepared to hang him, Ezio dodged death through some clever maneuvering and escaped, then reentered Masyaf undetected.

Locating the door of Altaïr's library and finding it locked, Ezio tracked down the Templar Captain who had ordered his execution. A chase ensued, ending with a spectacular crash outside a nearby small village. Ezio then found and eliminated the Captain. In his dying words, he mentioned Niccolò Polo's journal. Ezio searched the dead body and took the journal. Through it he learned about the precise details of Altaïr's final days, his meeting with the Polo brothers, and the five keys he sent with them to Constantinople. Eager to find these keys, Ezio immediately headed for the Ottoman Empire's capital.

ARRIVAL IN CONSTANTINOPLE

Sailing into Constantinople, Ezio met a young student who gave him a guided tour of the city as they drifted along the coast. Debarking in the Galata District, he discovered that an Assassin named Yusuf was waiting for him. A boisterous and cheerful leader, Yusuf took Ezio to the Assassins' headquarters within the city and outfitted him with new, Ottoman-style weaponry. Along the way, Yusuf also explained the nature of the conflict in Constantinople: the Byzantine Templars, once a small and toothless faction, had become powerful quickly enough to upset the delicate balance between the two groups. Though the Assassins had adapted to the shift in power as quickly as possible, the situation was still precarious. Ezio promised to help Yusuf and his men fight this threat while he searched for the Masyaf Keys.

› THE YEREBATAN CISTERN

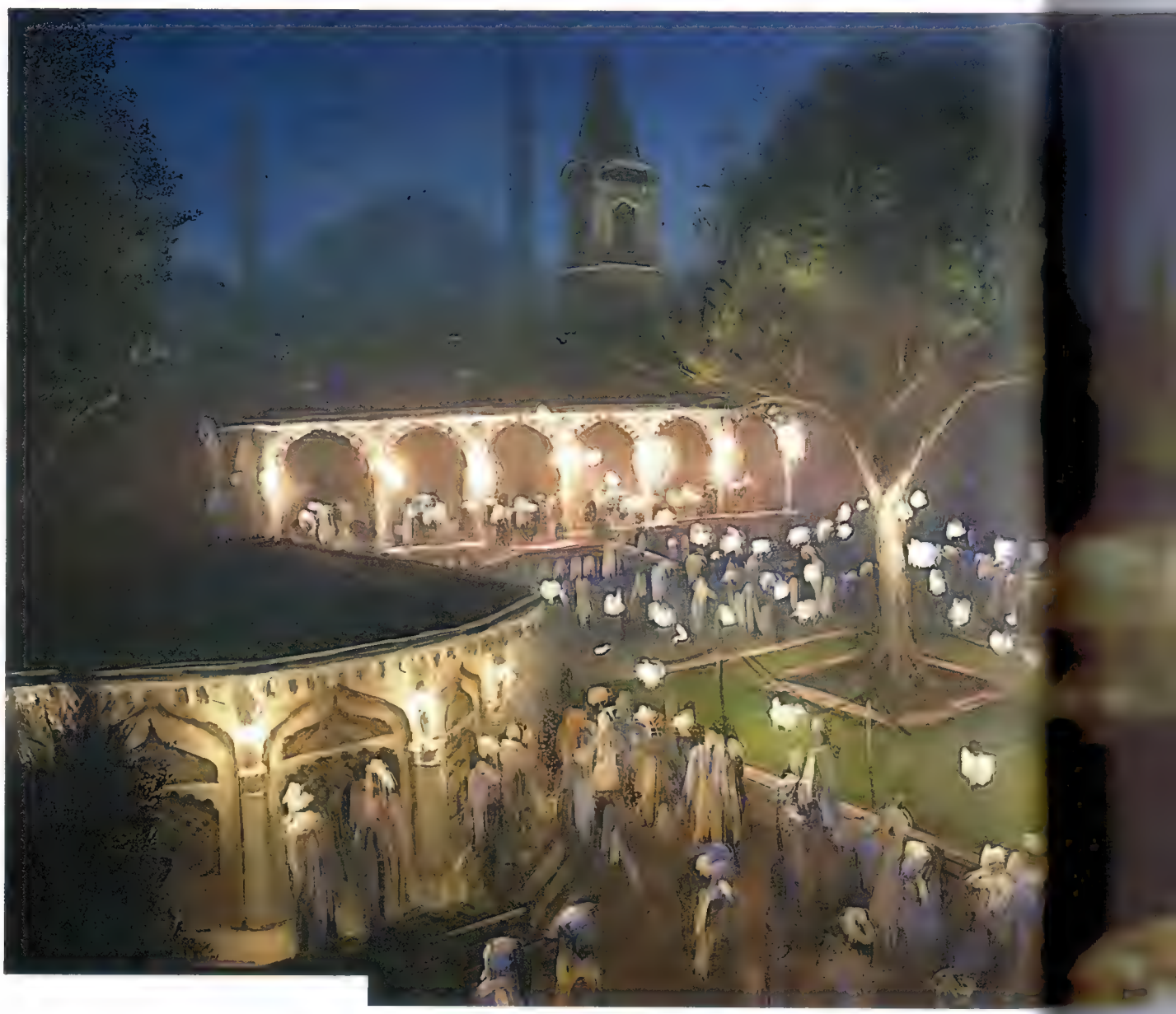
SOFIA SARTOR

[illegible]s search for the Keys first led to an encounter [illegible] Piri Reis, who pointed him in the direction [illegible] the site of the old Polo trading post, the same place where Niccolò and Maffeo had set up the [illegible] Assassin stronghold in Constantinople 250 [illegible]ears earlier. At the site Ezio met Sofia, a solitary [illegible]man running a popular bookshop. Much to [illegible]'s surprise, Ezio located a hidden door inside the shop which led into the Yerebatan Cistern, and eventually to the first of the five Masyaf Keys.

Touching the Key caused Ezio to become overwhelmed with a vision of Altaïr's life—the day he became a Master Assassin. Ezio was puzzled by this vision, but did not allow the event to slow him down. Included with this Key was an ancient map containing encoded instructions on how to find the remaining four. Ezio returned to Sofia's shop and asked for her assistance in decoding the map, a task which would require Ezio locate a number of rare books hidden around the city. Sofia agreed, under one condition: that she be allowed to keep the books for herself. Ezio accepted the bargain and the search for the remaining Keys began.

PRINCE SULEIMAN

Ezio met with Yusuf, eager to share what he had learned about the Polo shop. He found the Ottoman Assassin *en route* to the Topkapi palace, on a mission of great import—he hoped to prevent a Byzantine attack on the Ottoman royal family. Ezio joined him, believing that a good favor done for the Ottomans would give him greater access to the city and its people, which in turn could only benefit his search for the Keys.



The Assassins foiled the Byzantine attack in spectacular fashion, and Ezio was introduced to Prince Suleiman, who turned out to be the young student he had met some weeks before on his arrival to the city. Having already gained one another's trust, Suleiman asked Ezio to watch over him while he confronted the man responsible for palace security: a respected Janissary known as Tarik Barleti.

During a heated argument with the Janissaries, Suleiman sided with his uncle, Prince Ahmet, and questioned Tarik's loyalty as well as his ability to protect the Sultan's family. When Suleiman left, Ezio witnessed a tense scene between Ahmet and Tarik, which clearly illustrated the loathing the two men had for one another. Ahmet—whom the Sultan had chosen as his heir—believed Tarik was arrogant and disloyal; Tarik thought Ahmet lacked the qualities to be a good Sultan, and openly backed Ahmet's brother Selim, instead. The two men parted as even greater enemies than before.

In light of the assassination attempt, Suleiman asked Ezio to determine the nature of Tarik's involvement with the Byzantine Templars. Ezio agreed, as he felt the task fell in line with his own desire to find the Masyaf Keys, one of which he knew could be recovered from the Templars themselves.

on thereafter, Ezio located the second Key and was rewarded with another memory of his ancestor, this time showing him the events during which Al Mualim was defeated and the ensuing moments leading to Altaïr taking over the Brotherhood.

SAVING SULEIMAN

Over the next months, Ezio spent time searching for the lost books and delivering them to Sofia for decoding, while keeping an eye on the Janissaries and learning more about their loyalties. Eventually he tracked Tarik to a meeting with an ostentatious Greek merchant named Manuel Palaiologos. A large sum of money was exchanged, which Ezio learned was for a shipment of rifles to be delivered from the Sultan's own arsenal into Manuel's hands.

When Ezio returned to Suleiman with the information about Tarik and Manuel, the news devastated the young Prince. Manuel Palaiologos, he informed Ezio, was the heir to the defunct Byzantine throne, a fact that made him the most likely leader of the Templars. Suleiman asked Ezio to kill Tarik and find out where the weapons were being sent. Ezio tentatively agreed, believing the weapons were to be sent directly to Manuel, the one man who had to know the location of the Masyaf Key held by the Templars.

Ezio eventually located the third Key, experiencing another vision. Decades having passed, Altaïr returned from a long sojourn in Mongolia to find one of his sons dead and his former rival, Abbas, in control of Masyaf. A fight ensued, leading to the death of Maria and Altaïr's exile to Alamut, still in possession of the Apple but unwilling to use it.

SEARCH FOR THE TRAITOR

Ezio located Tarik at a Janissary camp and realized that to steal the map showing the location of Manuel's hideout, he would have to kill him. This turned out to be an unfortunate mistake—with his dying words, Tarik pledged loyalty to the Sultan, not the Templars. His interactions with Manuel, it turned out, had been part of his own secret attempts to flush the Templars out of hiding. He told Ezio what he had learned about them before dying—specifically, that the Byzantines were raising an army in a region in the Ottoman Empire called Cappadocia, deep inside a hidden city.

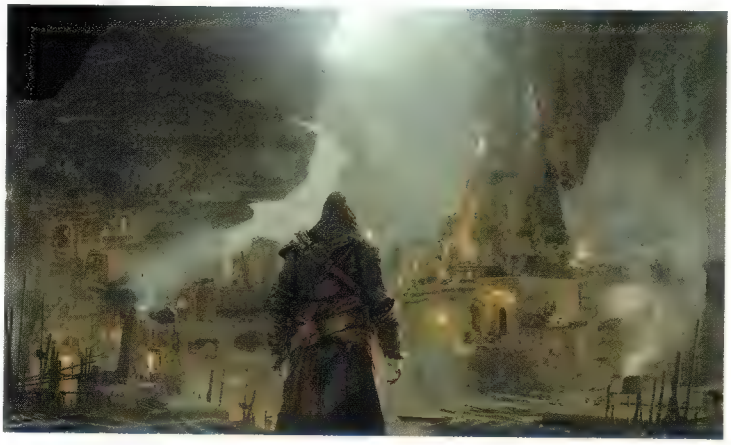
When Suleiman heard the truth about Tarik, he was crushed; his rashness had led to the death of a good man. Ezio consoled him, but also reminded him that they had no time to waste. Suleiman agreed, ordering a ship prepared for Ezio. As Ezio was about to depart, Prince Ahmet stormed into the room, fearful that he might be blamed for Tarik's death. Suleiman tried to calm his uncle, leaving Ezio alone and worried that Suleiman might have had Tarik killed for personal reasons.

Before leaving Constantinople, Ezio located the fourth Key—the last one still hidden in the city.

Upon grasping it, he saw a vision of Altaïr returning to Masyaf as an old man, determined to remove Abbas from power. When he succeeded, Altaïr announced his plan to decentralize the Assassin Brotherhood in order to prevent the possibility of another authoritarian leader.

CAPPADÓCIA

Over the months since arriving at the Polo shop, Ezio had grown fond of Sofia and their various interactions. However, with all the available Keys in his possession, his time was running short. He bid her farewell and set off to the ports. There he ran into Yusuf, who convinced him to leave the Keys behind in the event of his capture in Cappadocia. Ezio saw the wisdom in this and left the Masyaf Keys with the Assassins. He then attempted to board a ship but learned that the Janissaries had closed the



city gates since the death of Tarik, and shut down the ports in an effort to smoke out the killer. Ezio used his wits to divert their anger then slipped out of the city, heading east.

He arrived at a small, dismal town in the hills of Cappadocia—certainly not the place to garrison an army, or so it appeared. However, he soon discovered that the majority of the town and its inhabitants were below ground in a cave system large enough to hold 10,000 people. Dressed as a civilian, Ezio explored this secret Byzantine city in search of Manuel. Along his route he found countless weapon stashes, which he destroyed, as well as imprisoned Ottoman guards, whom he freed. He also managed to kill Manuel's ally, Shahkulu, before finally locating Manuel himself. A chase ensued, but Ezio inevitably caught and killed the Templar, then retrieved the Key.

This fifth Key revealed memories of Altaïr at ninety meeting with the Polo brothers and entrusting them with the library Keys. The vision made it clear Altaïr was nearing his last days...

Sadly, this marked the beginning of serious troubles for Ezio. As Manuel expired, Ahmet stepped from the shadows. Lamenting the loss of his careless colleague, he demanded the remaining Keys, but Ezio—to his relief—was not able to produce them. Ahmet was not surprised to hear this and told the Assassin he would be paying Sofia a visit in order to encourage him to reclaim the Keys and turn them over. Ezio was enraged, but was forced to flee rather than engage Ahmet head on.

CONFRONTING AHMET

Ezio returned to Constantinople and raced to Sofia's bookshop, where he found the body of Yusuf amid the debris of ransacked shelves and broken furniture—clearly, the Ottoman Assassin had attempted to protect Sofia from the Templars, an act which had cost him his life. Furious, Ezio headed to the Arsenal where Ahmet was waiting for him. Though he wanted to kill Ahmet then and there, Ezio pulled back at the last minute, for fear of never finding Sofia again. Ahmet arranged a simple trade: the Keys in exchange for Sofia. He then left, and Suleiman arrived, claiming to have heard everything. Crushed by his uncle's betrayal, he nonetheless thanked Ezio for all he had done and they parted as friends.

Ezio returned to the Assassins' headquarters to retrieve the Masyaf Keys only to find it under attack by the Templars. He helped defend the location after reclaiming the Keys, and in honor of Yusuf's sacrifice, appointed a new Master Assassin to lead the Ottoman Guild.

Afterwards, Ezio met with Ahmet in order to make the exchange. Always one step ahead, Ahmet took the keys while placing Sofia in a dangerous situation to slow Ezio's pursuit. Ezio rescued Sofia and together they chased Ahmet north of the city. After a harrowing pursuit, they caught up with him. At that moment, however, an army of Janissaries arrived, led by Ahmet's brother, Selim. Wasting few words, Selim murdered Ahmet where he stood and warned Ezio to never set foot in his city again, citing Suleiman's

respect for the Assassins as the only thing staying his blade. Bitterly disappointed at this turn of events, Ezio and Sofia left, as ordered.

THE APPLE'S MESSAGE

After departing Constantinople, Ezio and Sofia went to Masyaf in order to discover what the Keys might reveal. Ezio made his way to the library door and opened it, entering alone. Inside he discovered pile upon pile of ash—remnants of the books Altaïr had once owned. Puzzled by this he looked around the room until he noticed, on the far side, the skeleton of a man seated on a simple chair: Altaïr. Ezio approached the skeleton and touched a sixth key in its hand, triggering one final vision: Altaïr stood at the entrance of his library, speaking one last time with his son, Darim. After they embraced, his son left, leaving Altaïr to lock himself in the library and reveal the Apple of Eden. Ezio could somehow tell that Altaïr had come to realize that his destiny was not to be passed on in ink, but rather in blood. Hiding the Apple in a secret alcove, the old Assassin then sat down to record one final memory into a sixth Key before settling back to peaceably await his death.

Ezio then looked up, addressing *Desmond*—who was experiencing these memories through the Animus. Ezio explained that his destiny was about to be fulfilled and that his time as an Assassin had come to a close. He now wished to live a life of peace and quiet with Sofia. When he was finished ridding himself of all his gear, Ezio held out his arms and asked Desmond to embrace him. Suddenly, Desmond was there too, standing beside his ancestor. They embraced, and Desmond was privy to one great vision—a final message from Altaïr's Apple, conducted through Ezio; a message revealing the truth about the final days of the First Civilization, the location of the Grand Temple, and instructions on how to enter it.

SHAO JUN

In the later years of Ezio's life, a young Chinese Assassin arrived in Florence, seeking counsel as to how to deal with the oppressive rule of Emperor Jiajing, who had nearly wiped out the presence of the Assassins in China. Though Ezio attempted to turn her away at first, preferring to keep that part of his life in the past, Sofia's quiet insistence on sheltering the young woman gave Shao Jun the time to wear through his resolve. Though she remained observant and quietly respectful, the young Chinese woman's presence and the knowledge of what she had lost during her fight against tyranny in her homeland were enough to remind Ezio of his days as an Assassin—and of what he had learned during that lifetime. Wisdom, he knew, would be essential to the young woman's goal of rebuilding the Assassin Brotherhood in China.

Ezio took Shao Jun to the place where his family had been executed many decades ago and spoke to her of what he had known then, and everything he had learned during his battle against the Borgias: fighting to preserve what inspired hope was the key that brought people together in a fraternity which could not be easily destroyed. That, he told her, was the key to winning back her own people. While achieving this would take a long time, he assured her it was the path most worthwhile in the end.

The Emperor's servants caught up with Shao Jun and though the young Assassin attempted to lead them away from Ezio—already putting into practice what he had taught her and what her own mentor had done for her—the old Assassin joined the fight. Together, they defeated the Emperor's servants. Already eager to return to her homeland and start rebuilding, Shao Jun soon departed, though not without bearing a gift from Ezio: a mysterious box to be opened one day, should she lose her way.

CIVILIAN AND MILITARY OTTOMAN-STYLE CLOTHING DURING THE RENAISSANCE.

> LOWER CLASS CITIZENS

> MIDDLE CLASS CITIZENS

> MIDDLE CLASS CITIZENS

> GUARDS

> UPPER CLASS CITIZENS

› JANISSARY

› BOMB EXPERT

› SWORDSMAN

› SOLDIER LEADER

› SOLDIER WITH ARQUEBUS

› SOLDIER WITH HALBERD

› SOLDIER WITH ARQUEBUS

› BOMB EXPERT

› SOLDIER WITH AXE

2
#C

THE RENAISSANCE: LEGACY

DEFENSE OF MONTERIGGIONI

Expecting an attack from Florence, Mario Auditore, recently appointed ruler of Monteriggioni, began preparing for war in 1454. The *condottiero* supervised the local smiths as they crafted stronger weapons and armor, thus providing his mercenaries with top of the line equipment. Mario also personally trained his men, to show them new fighting techniques as well as how best to patrol the ramparts and streets of the city. During the preparation, Mario—who was also an Assassin—helped draft a list of targets, whose death would shift Italy's delicate balance of power, and perhaps help him defend Monteriggioni. With the assistance of fellow Assassins, the *condottiero* hunted them down.

Upon learning that the attack on Monteriggioni was imminent, Mario sent spies to intercept delicate information about enemy troop movement. He also visited several villages in the vicinity, promising to defend their inhabitants in exchange for military support and whatever food and other supplies they could spare. With tension running high, unrest struck Monteriggioni and Mario was forced to intervene to stop a dispute between some of the local families. Convinced that someone had triggered the incident, he sent his agents to find the agitator. They soon uncovered the culprit: Luciano Pezzati. After taking care of Luciano's guards with his mercenaries, Mario dueled the man, bested him, and brought him to the Villa for questioning.

Mario, however, had no time to lose as a Florentine host, led by the *condottiero* Federico da Montefeltro, was approaching the city. Mario's men successfully brushed off the first wave of attack, but the Florentine forces began to mount a siege against Monteriggioni. Mario led his cavalry to destroy the enemies' trebuchets. With his mercenaries, he eventually broke off the siege, thus winning the battle.

From Luciano Pezzati, Mario learned that the goal of the Florentine attack had not been to take Monteriggioni, but rather to find an ancient artifact hidden somewhere within the city. Mario investigated the matter, questioning local architects and searching the Auditore family journals and records. He discovered that one of his ancestors had drained a well before excavating it even more deeply. With mercenaries and a miner, the *condottiero* descended into the old well, where he discovered a secret hallway. Exploring it, the group encountered several deadly traps, but Mario eventually found what he was looking for—though it cost him an eye.

The *condottiero* refused to let his men open the simple wooden box he had uncovered, believing the artifact within—the Shroud—could be dangerous. Desperate to get their hands on the artifact, his own men charged him and he was forced to defend himself. Resisting the urge to examine the artifact, Mario hid it in the Villa before contacting his brother Giovanni, convinced that the Brotherhood would know what to do with such a treasure.

BATTLE OF AGNADELLO

The Battle of Agnadello, which pitted the French army of King Louis XII against the joint mercenary forces of Bartolomeo d'Alviano and Niccolò di Pitigliano, was one of the most significant battles of the Italian Wars.

Established in 1508, the League of Cambrai was an alliance between Pope Julius II, Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I, Louis XII of France and Ferdinand II of Aragon, ostensibly formed to fight against the Turks. However, in April 1509, the League instead turned against the Republic of Venice. The first incursion of the League into Venetian territory came from the French forces, led by King Louis himself. Leaving Milan on 15 April, Louis initiated his advance into Venetian lands.

The Venetian defense relied almost exclusively upon the mercenary troops of *condottieri* Bartolomeo d'Alviano and his cousin Niccolò di Pitigliano. After several weeks of conflict, during which only light skirmishes were fought, the French army crossed the Adda River at the town of Cassano d'Adda. The *condottieri* decided to march south, where they hoped to establish a stronger line of defense.

On 14 May, Bartolomeo's troops met a French detachment, which had massed around the town of Agnadello. During the battle, the *condottiero* was wounded, but nevertheless managed to rally his men and drive back the charging French cavalry and pikemen. Meanwhile, he sent word to Niccolò, whose army was but a few miles away. Bartolomeo believed that with Niccolò's support the mercenaries would be able to crush the French troops. However, Niccolò—for reasons unbeknown at the time—refused to commit his troops to Agnadello, and instead

continued his southward march, a fact which Bartolomeo remained unaware of.

Bartolomeo led his men to attack a French patrol north of the village, taking the soldiers by surprise. After a fierce but quick battle, the mercenaries defeated the French soldiers. Shortly after, the *condottiero* pitted his men against another patrol. This time, Bartolomeo used a ruse: some of his mercenaries pretended to surrender while the rest hid in the vineyards, ready to ambush the enemy. They easily won the skirmish.

Returning to Agnadello, Bartolomeo realized that the village had been attacked, with several houses still ablaze. He ordered his mercenaries to help the villagers quench the flames, thus earning both their trust and respect. Many men from Agnadello decided to join the ranks of Bartolomeo's army, while many other villagers provided them with weapons, provisions and other supplies.

Unfortunately, it was not Niccolò's mercenary troop that came to Agnadello, but the remainder of the French army, led by King Louis. The French now greatly outnumbered the mercenaries and surrounded them on three sides. Louis's troops easily defeated them. Bartolomeo was captured and approximately half of his 8,000 soldiers were killed. The rest were either captured or fled.

The Battle of Agnadello was a crushing defeat for the Venetian. When news of it reached Niccolò di Pitigliano's army, many of his mercenaries deserted *en masse*, forcing him to retreat to Treviso with what remained of his forces. Without further significant resistance, King Louis proceeded to conquer most of the Venetian territory.

ASSASSINATION OF NICCOLÒ DI PITIGLIANO

In 1510, the Assassin Brotherhood dispatched Francesco Vecellio to assassinate the *condottiero* Niccolò di Pitigliano in order to free the population of Lonigo, Italy, from his tyrannical rule—and presumably to avenge his betrayal of his cousin Bartolomeo d'Alviano, whom he had refused to aid during the Battle of Agnadello the previous year.

Francesco made his way to Lonigo and, dressed as a local, began to explore the town to gather information. He eavesdropped on conversations in the streets, visited a tavern regularly attended by his target, and questioned the courtesans he frequented. Francesco also intercepted and interrogated several of di Pitigliano's couriers, thus acquiring a great deal of information about him. Francesco soon learned that the inhabitants of Lonigo bore no love for the *condottiero*.

A calculating and somewhat cautious Assassin, Francesco began to stalk Niccolò and his guards, noting every detail of their routine. He then implemented a carefully drawn plan. After circulating rumors about Niccolò which served to bolster the populace's hatred towards him, he hired thugs and called upon other Assassins for help. Instructing his men to raise and lead an angry mob to Niccolò's manor, Francesco barricaded all exits before slipping inside. Taking advantage of the riotous crowd, which kept Niccolò's guards busy, the Assassin evaded detection. He located his mark and struck him, leaving him for dead in the manor, which was now ablaze.

Severely wounded, Niccolò crawled towards his desk and pried open the floorboards beneath it, pulling out the Shroud—a Piece of Eden with mysterious healing properties. Somehow rejuvenated by the artifact, but still in excruciating pain, Niccolò took the Shroud and escaped his burning manor. As he stepped outside, gasping for air, he realized that he would not survive for long, and wrapped himself in the Shroud. The artifact, however, did not cure him. After much suffering, Niccolò died. The last thing he saw was Francesco pulling the Shroud off him.

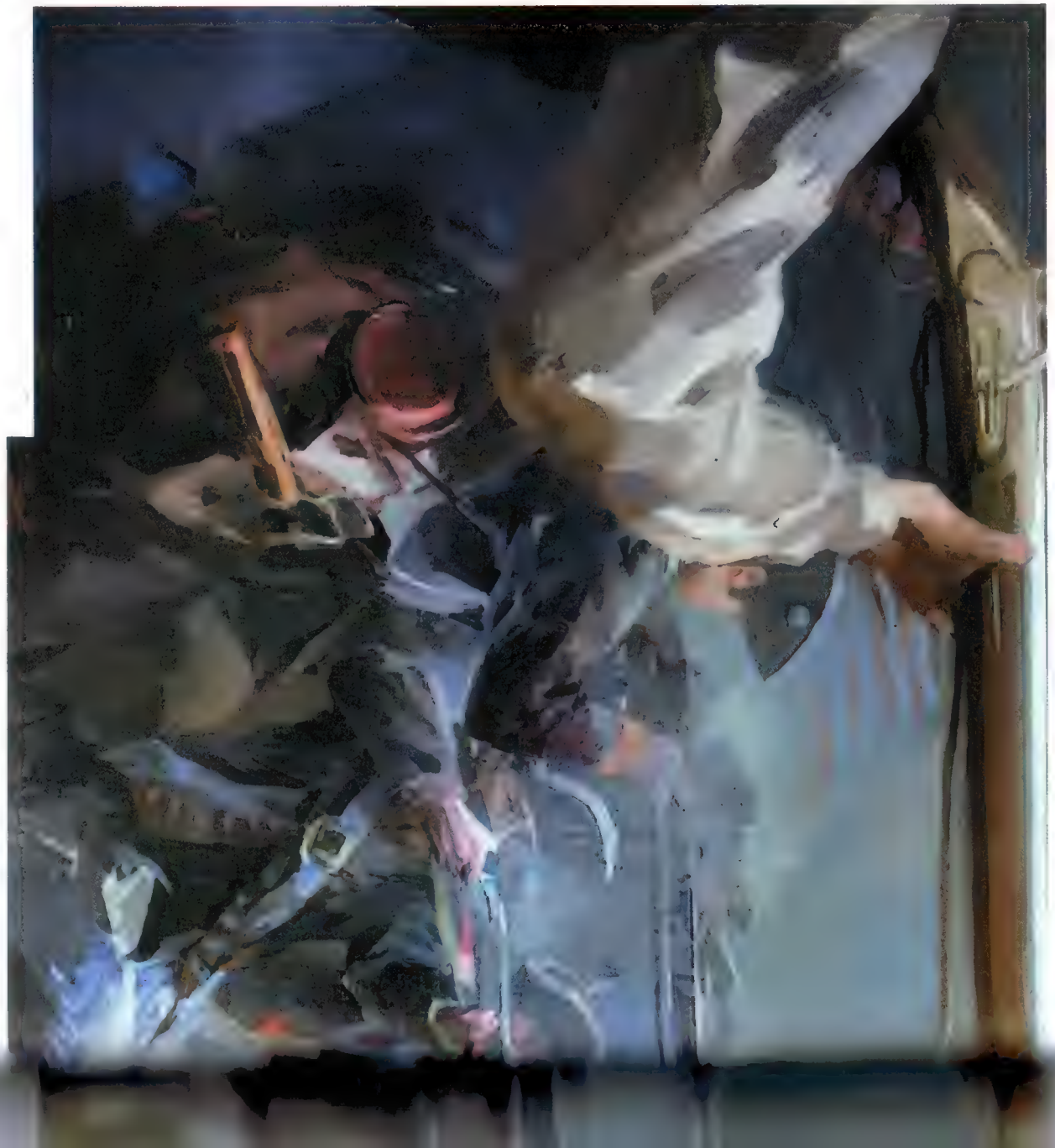
2 :
#D

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

In the early sixteenth century, the Assassin Brotherhood established branches in North America in order to prepare a means of defense against the inevitable arrival of the Templars. North America represented new opportunities for the Templars and it was only a matter of time before they would attempt to take control of the territory. The Assassins saw their own arrival in North America as a chance to change the status quo, and to prevent the Templar dominance and imposition of order. Accordingly, the Templars' arrival in the region prior to the Seven Years War (1756 – 1763) set the balance of power in North America.

Between the founding of the colony of Virginia in 1607 to the establishment of Georgia in 1733, Great Britain established thirteen colonies on the east coast of the North American continent. Most of the colonists were of English descent and saw themselves as British citizens. Prior to a series of taxes being imposed from across the Atlantic, there were very few tangible bonds between the thirteen colonies. Each colony evolved on its own terms and each had its own distinct relationship with England, as they frequently struggled between themselves for economic power. One of the only things they shared was an attachment to Great Britain. The colonists' participation in the Seven Years War (1756 – 1763) was a testament to their desire to preserve English traditions.

The Templars arrived in North America just before the Seven Years War, seeking a storehouse built by the First Civilization, which they believed was located somewhere in the Northeastern part of the British colonies. While the French and the British colonists struggled over territory, the Templar and the Assassins began a new chapter in their centuries-old conflict.



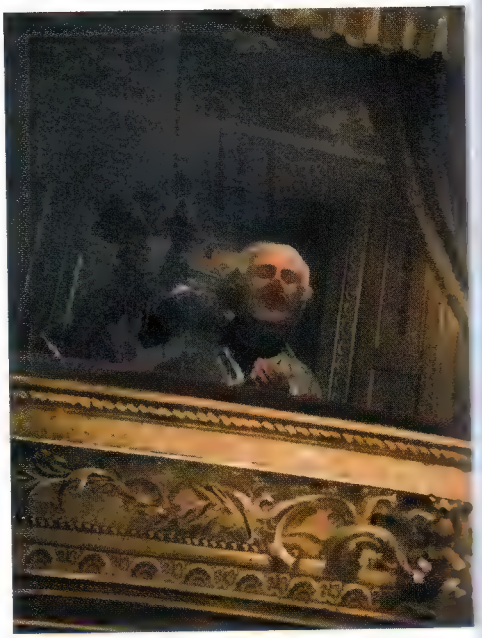
3 : D : 1
#H

SEVEN YEARS WAR

Following a successful assassination assignment at the London Opera House, Haytham Kenway, an ancestor of Desmond Miles, was sent to North America by his master, Reginald Birch, with a mission to find a Temple built by Those Who Came Before and to establish a Templar guild. Kenway's arrival in 1754 immediately upset the status quo of the region. During the Seven Years War (1756 – 1763) in America, also known as the "French and Indian War", Templar research sent Haytham to various sites across the colonies.

The Seven Years War began when British colonists attempted to expand their settlements westward, seeking the rich lands across the Appalachian Mountains. British colonists expected to gain opportunities for economic growth and land settlement. This led to a dramatic increase in territorial disputes with the French and indigenous populations in the area.

Major General Edward Braddock, a former Templar and the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in America, aggressively raided Native territories in order to push out the French and the indigenous populations to build British settlements. The Abenaki, Lenape, and Shawnee groups fought back, and eventually even Haytham Kenway began to resent Braddock's merciless operations against the French and local Natives. Haytham conspired with his *Kanien'kehá:ka* ally Kaniehtí:io, and organized a raid against Braddock after his ill-fated attempt to capture Fort Duquesne from the French.



> HAYTHAM AND HIS TARGET AT THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE IN LONDON, APRIL 12, 1754

After Braddock was eliminated, Kaniehtí:io took Haytham to a cave believed to be a First Civilization storehouse. Expecting to find clues leading to a key that would allow him to penetrate deeper into the Temple, Haytham was disappointed to find only simple pictographs.

Haytham and Kaniehtí:io grew closer and conceived a child named Ratonhnhaké:ton, who would later be known as Connor. However, Kaniehtí:io found out about Haytham's Templar connections and urged him to depart. Haytham never saw her again and would not discover the existence of his son until years later.

Colonial attacks on indigenous villages continued for a number of years. When Connor was five years old, he encountered British General Charles Lee, who supposedly destroyed his village in a fire that also claimed the life of Connor's mother.

Despite such atrocities, the Native populations' alliances shifted back and forth between the British and French throughout the war. Once the French realized that their support from indigenous populations was decreasing, they were forced to abandon Fort Duquesne. The British gained control of the Upper Ohio Valley, eventually capturing almost all of the North American territories occupied by the French.

During that era, the Templars manipulated political alliances to gain valuable leadership roles, which saw their power grow exponentially towards the end of the Seven Years War. Experiencing their expansion, the Templars began to focus primarily on bringing the colonies under Templar rule, and pushed aside the search for the hidden Temple.

In the aftermath of the war, the Templars shattered the balance of power by murdering ninety percent of the Colonial Assassin Brotherhood members. The only Assassin who survived fled into the wilderness and distanced himself from any contact with the outside world, for fear of encountering Templar members.

The balance of power shifted in other ways as well. During the war, and more importantly after the conflict, England interfered with the activities of the colonists on the frontier. The British authorities attempted to manage individual economic transactions between colonists and Natives from outside the colonial settlements. What began as a regional confrontation for territory and economic control soon transformed into a large-scale conflict involving British authority. The colonists' ability to self-govern was eradicated when the British began to regulate the economy in the newly acquired territories.

› NATIVE AMERICAN RAID DURING THE SEVEN YEARS WAR

"NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION"

The Seven Years War proved extremely costly for the British Empire. The British Parliament was forced to impose a series of taxes on the colonies to recoup the cost of the war. The measures imposed by the Parliament damaged the colonial attachment to Great Britain.

The Sugar and Stamp Acts imposed by the British Parliament on colonial America represented the first serious attempt to raise money in order to pay for the troops stationed in North America. The Stamp Act of 1765 stated that any printed material in the colonies, such as newspapers and legal documents, had to be made on paper approved and stamped in London. Colonists felt that this violated their rights as British citizens and fiercely opposed the act.

The Colonists did not have any representation in the British Parliament and were powerless to act against the taxes being levied on them. Colonial assemblies sent petitions to the King and Parliament in protest, and the Stamp Act Congress marked the first significant joint effort by the colonies against any Parliamentary law.

› STAMP ACT CONGRESS, NEW YORK CITY, OCTOBER 7, 1765

The most successful countermeasure to the imposition of unfair taxes on the colonists was a movement started in New York, which resulted in a boycott of British products. Merchants stopped importing some British goods until the Stamp Act was nullified, on March 18, 1766.

Despite the first large-scale clash between Parliament and the colonists, the British conceived the 1767 Townshend Acts to impose additional taxes on essential imported goods needed by the colonists. This led to another massive boycott by merchants and consumers.

The colonials, the Templars, and the Assassins all saw the fragile relationship with England deteriorating and knew that other confrontations would emerge.

RATONHNHAKÉ:TON'S VISION QUEST

In the aftermath of the Seven Years War, the Templars sought to take advantage of the tumultuous political environment in North America to impose their order in the region.

However, the emergence of a young half-native boy named Ratonhnhaké:ton threatened the Templar's supremacy. The invasive presence of the British endangered the survival of Ratonhnhaké:ton's home village. The elders did not want to draw any attention on their village. The Clan Mother was made nervous by Ratonhnhaké:ton's desire to leave the village and to fight back.

Soon afterwards, Ratonhnhaké:ton experienced a vision where he was transformed into an eagle and was allowed to witness potential future events affecting his village and the plight of the Americans.

The visions showed Ratonhnhaké:ton that maintaining the status quo would not help his community or the world. He saw the Templars become proficient in First Civilization technology, leaving a trail of destruction in their wake. The experience was a rite of passage, which bestowed upon him a personal responsibility to prevent the Templars from advancing their cause and to protect his village

from annihilation. The visions showed him Assassin symbols and guided him to a man who could help him make sense of things. In the aftermath of these visions, the Clan Mother realized that she had no choice but to let Ratonhnhaké:ton pursue his destiny in order to protect the village.

The man that Ratonhnhaké:ton was looking for was Achilles, an Assassin who went into hiding after the Seven Years War, away from the rivalry between the Brotherhood and the Templars. Achilles had lost faith in his Order. The arrival of Ratonhnhaké:ton changed his mind. Achilles trained Connor in the ways of the Assassins and once again joined the Brotherhood's efforts to stop the Templars' tyranny in North America.

BOSTON MASSACRE

Because of the tension caused by unpopular Parliamentary decrees, British soldiers were stationed in Boston to enforce the law and protect colonial officials. On March 5, 1770, the troops of the Twenty-Ninth Regiment were sent to relieve the members of the Eighth Regiment who were besieged by an angry crowd, which included many rope makers. Achilles and his *protégé* Ratonhnhaké:ton – now renamed Connor by Achilles – witnessed the commotion and saw the crowds rushing towards the Custom House where the soldiers and colonials confronted each other.

The British soldiers, under the command of Captain Thomas Preston, did not appear to hear Preston's order to hold fire, though it is believed that the Templars shot first to cause chaos and confusion. Achilles noticed Haytham Kenway and a Templar sniper on a nearby rooftop, but he and Connor failed to prevent the shot from being fired at the soldiers. The British soldiers believed the shot came from the mob and returned fire, instantly killing three civilians, including Crispus Attucks, a slave who became the first martyr of the American Revolution. A Redcoat identified Connor from a rooftop and accused him of firing the first shot and instigating the massacre. Connor fled the scene and then the city.

This was the first violent clash between colonial civilians and the British army. The loss of human lives fueled the growing resentment of the residents towards Great Britain, prompting more active and organized resistance.

BOSTON TEA PARTY

The colonists' fierce resistance to the new taxes and laws imposed by the British – such as the Townshend Revenue Act of 1967 – resulted in severe financial problems for the British East India Company, which was the sole importer of tea to the colonies. The company was forbidden to sell directly to the colonies. By law, it was required to sell its tea via English wholesalers, who then exported it to the colonies, resold it, and taxed it. Consequently, the cost of tea in America was very high.

The high price of the product, the large-scale boycotts by the colonies, and the rampant Templar-backed tea smuggling operations left the British East India Company with an enormous stock of unsold tea. The solution proposed by the Parliament was the Tea Act of 1773, which allowed the company to export tea to American soil on its own terms. However, the act still contained the three pence tax on tea imported by the colonies.

Despite these efforts, tea smuggling continued. Indeed, it proved to be a lucrative business for the Templar William Johnson. The Assassins discovered evidence of

Johnson's tea smuggling and vowed to put an end to it. Along with a group called the Sons of Liberty, Connor and Samuel Adams, an Assassin ally, decided to act against the Templar smuggling operations. When shipments of tea arrived in the Boston Harbor, many citizens wanted to return the merchandise to England to avoid paying taxes.

However, Thomas Hutchinson, Lieutenant Governor and Chief Justice of Massachusetts, was determined to uphold British law and impose taxes on the tea. On December 16, 1773, following the perseverance of Hutchinson at the Old South Meeting House to obey British law, Adams declared that "this meeting can do nothing further to save this country", a statement which some believe doubled as a signal to destroy the tea.

Connor and some allies – which included Stéphane Chapheau and John Hancock – advanced on Boston Harbor. Some concealed their identities under Native American disguises, worn to symbolize the fact that the colonists no longer identified themselves as British, but rather as Americans. Connor and his allies boarded the three tea-carrying ships in the harbor – the Beaver, the Eleanor, and the Dartmouth – and smashed three hundred and forty chests of British East India Company tea, dumping approximately forty-six tons of tea into the water. The Templars William Johnson, John Pitcairn and Charles Lee could only watch powerlessly as their plans to use smuggling money to purchase Native lands were drowned in front of them.

The Boston Tea Party was a significant act of defiance by the colonists. Their rejection of British goods established a new unified identity that opposed the British Empire. However, this resistance would also lead to violent confrontations between the British troops and colonial citizens.

› BOSTON HARBOR

COERCIVE ACTS

The British Parliament passed the Coercive Acts – also known as the Intolerable Acts – in 1774 as a punitive response to colonists' actions during the Boston Tea Party. These new laws were conceived to reinforce British authority and to limit the colonial resistance movements. The Boston Port Act was established to close Boston's ports until the British East India Company was reimbursed for its lost merchandise.

The Quebec Act of 1774 enlarged the borders of the Province of Quebec and implemented reforms that were sympathetic to French Catholics in the region, effectively limiting the colonists' westward expansion. This measure was a bitter pill to swallow for the colonists, who sought to reap the benefits of their newly acquired land.

These Acts severely restricted the development of the colonists' political power. In response, they organized the First Continental Congress, which represented a crucial step in their detachment from Great Britain, unifying the colonies like never before.

› BRITISH TROOPS APPROACHING CONCORD AT AROUND [illegible] A.M. APR. [illegible] 1775

BATTLES OF LEXINGTON AND CONCORD

The battles of Lexington and Concord were the first armed confrontations between the British soldiers and colonial citizens. Alongside the Templar John Pitcairn, British General and Massachussets military governor Thomas Gage ordered the troops to destroy a stockpile of weapons and ammunition in Concord, Massachusetts. The British also planned to march on Lexington, where Pitcairn aimed to find Samuel Adams and John Hancock, two major colonial provocateurs.

Connor believed that Pitcairn intended to assassinate Adams and Hancock. He intercepted information that exposed the true goal of the mission. Adams and Hancock were really the most important part of the Templar and British plan. On the night of April 18, 1775, Connor rode with the Patriot Paul Revere from Boston to Concord to warn the town that the Redcoats were coming. Before leaving, Revere ordered to hang two lanterns in the bell tower of Boston's Old North Church to signal that the British were arriving by sea. Connor and Revere reached Adams and Hancock in Lexington and guided them towards a safe place to hide.

On the morning of April 19, the British arrived in Lexington. The Patriot forces were made up of farmers and field hands, and were vastly outnumbered by the trained, professional British soldiers. Although both British Major John Pitcairn and Lexington's Commander of the Militia John Parker ordered their men to hold their fire, a shot was fired nonetheless. In the end, the result was just a minor skirmish, and the British troops regrouped and continued towards Concord.

Soon afterwards, Connor reached Concord and warned the Patriots that the Regulars were on the march. The same could not be said of Paul Revere, who was captured by soldiers before reaching the town. Connor's participation was crucial in ousting the British troops out of Concord. His efforts provided time for the Patriots to organize a proper defense of the ammunition supply, and Major Pitcairn ordered his soldiers to fall back. Though a few Patriots perished, the colonists, with the Assassin's help, successfully held their positions and defended Concord against the British advances.

These first encounters with the well-trained British military led the colonists to create a national army. On June 14, 1775, the Continental Congress appointed George Washington as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army.

BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL

The Battle of Bunker Hill – also known as the Battle of Breed's Hill – occurred when both the Patriots and the British attempted to seize unoccupied hills overlooking Boston. In June of 1775, colonial troops learned of a British plan to capture the two hills, and quickly established a position on Breed's Hill. On June 17, 1775, British Commander and Templar John Pitcairn launched an assault to capture both hills and the Charlestown peninsula.

Connor crossed the battlefield and found Pitcairn in his camp on Moulton Hill, where he killed the Templar. Despite Connor's efforts, the British forces eventually took over the hills and fortified their position. Though they lost the battle, the colonial forces retreated with limited casualties, and Pitcairn's death struck an important blow against the Templar operations.

Although they were inexperienced and were unable to coordinate any adequate means of defense with their limited equipment, the Battle of Bunker Hill proved that the soldiers in the Continental Army were able to confront the British forces. Moreover, Bunker Hill warned Great Britain that the war would not be easily won, and that blatant aggression would prove costly for its army.

In the aftermath of Pitcairn's assassination, Connor intercepted a note that revealed a Templar plot to murder George Washington, as Washington's leadership, combined with the early success of the Assassin and the Patriots, threatened the Templars' plans for controlling America's destiny. Connor decided to intervene in order to prevent the Templars from seizing control of the Continental Army.

Despite the limited resources he received from Congress, Washington was able to engage his forces in Bunker Hill, which convinced the Templars of the need to eliminate him in order to put Charles Lee in charge of the Revolutionary leadership. In order to take control of America's destiny, the Templars decided to try to eliminate Washington.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

The early military confrontations led to Britain devising punitive laws known as the Coercive Acts, which forced the colonies to organize themselves and coordinate protests. Between the two meetings of the Continental Congress, the colonies inevitably changed their position from waging a war for reconciliation to waging a war to break away from Great Britain.

A group of Founding Fathers, which included influential men such as Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Samuel Adams, and Thomas Jefferson, signed the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson, a representative of Virginia, was selected to draft the document, which was edited by the representatives of each colony until it was finally approved on July 4, 1776.

Connor and Achilles were present at the Pennsylvania State House to warn Washington of the plot against his life, and to prevent any sign of Templar influence on the colonial leadership.

The signing was a major breakthrough for the Assassins in their fight against the Templars, which put further distance between the Templars and their goals of controlling the American territory.

3 : D : 1
#J

ENCAMPMENT AT VALLEY FORGE

Following a defeat at the Battle of Brandywine on September 11, 1777, and a failed attempt at taking Germantown from the British on October 4, the Continental Congress was forced to abandon Philadelphia and move its army command.

In the aftermath of the defeats around Philadelphia, Connor tried to warn Commander-in-Chief Washington of the looming betrayal of General Charles Lee, who wanted to weaken Patriot troops. Washington ignored the warning and continued his route outside the city. The Templars attempted to replace him as commander, citing his poor performance in his previous battles. Despite Washington's apparent indecisiveness and timid defense, the leadership of the Continental Army remained in his hands.

After Haytham told Connor that the Templars were not supporting the British but were rather favorable to the colonists' cause, Connor and his father collaborated to weaken British forces. They headed towards Fort George, the Templar base of operations in New York, where they discovered a letter stating that the British General William Howe and his brother planned to resign in October 1777. They also learned that the remaining British authorities would meet at the ruins of Trinity Church, which gave them the impression that the British leadership was beginning to fracture. This information provided a window of opportunity for the Templars who sought to take control of the leadership apparatus in North America.

During the winter of 1777, Washington established his army quarters in Valley Forge, just outside Philadelphia. Despite the harsh environment and the struggle to collect supplies and food, the conditions in Valley Forge were similar to other camps during the revolutionary conflict. Washington was able to improve the distribution and transportation of supplies to his camp, but was anxious, as he believed that the British were aware of the condition of his forces.

While stationed at Valley Forge, the Patriot soldiers were trained by the Marquis de Lafayette with the help of Prussian General Baron von Steuben, who was recruited to instruct the soldiers in drill maneuvers. This attempt to professionalize the Continental Army would ultimately contribute to its future successes.

> CONNOR AND GEORGE WASHINGTON IN THEIR WAY TO THE VALLEY FORGE CAMP, WINTER 1777.

Although the winter conditions were particularly difficult, the Continental Army emerged as a stronger unit. Connor and the Marquis de Lafayette coordinated their efforts to ensure that the military forces would be ready for their next engagements.

During the Patriot encampment at Valley Forge, Connor and his father found themselves collaborating once again. This time, the mission was to find the Templar Benjamin Church. Connor discovered that Church was stealing Patriot supplies and re-selling them for his own profit. By not reporting his actions and keeping the money for himself, Church was also betraying the Templar order. Connor and Haytham chased him into an abandoned brewery on New York's waterfront, but Church deftly escaped the brewery and left for Martinique.

In the summer of 1778, Connor and Haytham boarded the vessel Aquila, and intercepted Church's ship in Martinique. Connor eliminated Church and recovered the stolen supplies.

Soon afterwards, Connor and Haytham continued their partnership to eradicate British forces. They learned through further interrogations of Loyalist commanders that the British were preparing to abandon Philadelphia and walk towards New York, which was now the sole focus of their cause. This information proved valuable to the Patriots, who hoped to stop the British troops before they reached the city, but also to the Templars, who saw an opportunity to take a leadership role in the colonists' endeavors. Not surprisingly, Connor and Haytham disagreed over who should receive this crucial information.

After returning to Valley Forge and sharing the British plans with George Washington, Connor was taken aback when he learned from Washington's private correspondence that Washington had ordered the destruction of Native villages following their collaboration with the British. Moreover, Connor learned from Haytham that Washington had participated in similar operations during the Seven Years War and was responsible for the burning of his home village, which had cost the life of his mother. The Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army could not refute the allegations.

Connor then became completely disillusioned, and felt betrayed by both Washington and his father. In a state of disbelief, Connor parted ways with both of them, pointing out to his father that his mother's death remained the act of Charles Lee, who was directly under Haytham's command.

BATTLE OF MONMOUTH

After leaving Valley Forge in June 1778, General Washington intended to intercept British troops who, according to intelligence gathered by a combined effort between Connor and Haytham, were marching from Philadelphia to New York. After capturing Philadelphia in 1777, the British abandoned the city to move northeast and focus their efforts on New York, now that France had entered the war, taking sides with the Patriots. The Patriots had made impressive preparations for battle, gathering nearly 10,000 men, all of whom were ready for a major confrontation.

On June 28, 1778, Major General Charles Lee was ordered to stop British movements and lead a frontal assault against them in Monmouth, New Jersey. However, his inaction and lack of leadership resulted in his rapid loss of control over the situation. As a result of Lee's Templar machinations, his troops were repelled by British firing lines. He ordered a retreat, acting against Washington's orders, and abandoned his own brigade in order to make Washington look bad. While retreating, it appeared that Lee attempted to sabotage the Patriot defense lines in a bid to relieve General Washington of his command. Connor tried his best to defend the outnumbered Patriots and save the day.

Meanwhile, General Washington's army advanced along the Monmouth road and encountered Lee's troops. Connor reached Washington and informed him of Lee's betrayal and orders to retreat. Washington dismissed Lee and sought to rally the fleeing soldiers in an attempt to save the Patriots' efforts. In the end, there was no real victor in the battle, and General Charles Lee was brought up on formal charges and his military service was terminated. The Battle of Monmouth was the last major engagement fought in the northern theater of the Revolutionary War.

NAVAL BATTLES

The naval theater of the Revolutionary War would ultimately help decide its outcome. On October 13, 1775, the Continental Navy was formally created but its resources were extremely limited. Congress did not view the navy as a top priority due to the high cost of shipbuilding, and the shortage of labour and materials needed to create a dissuasive force.

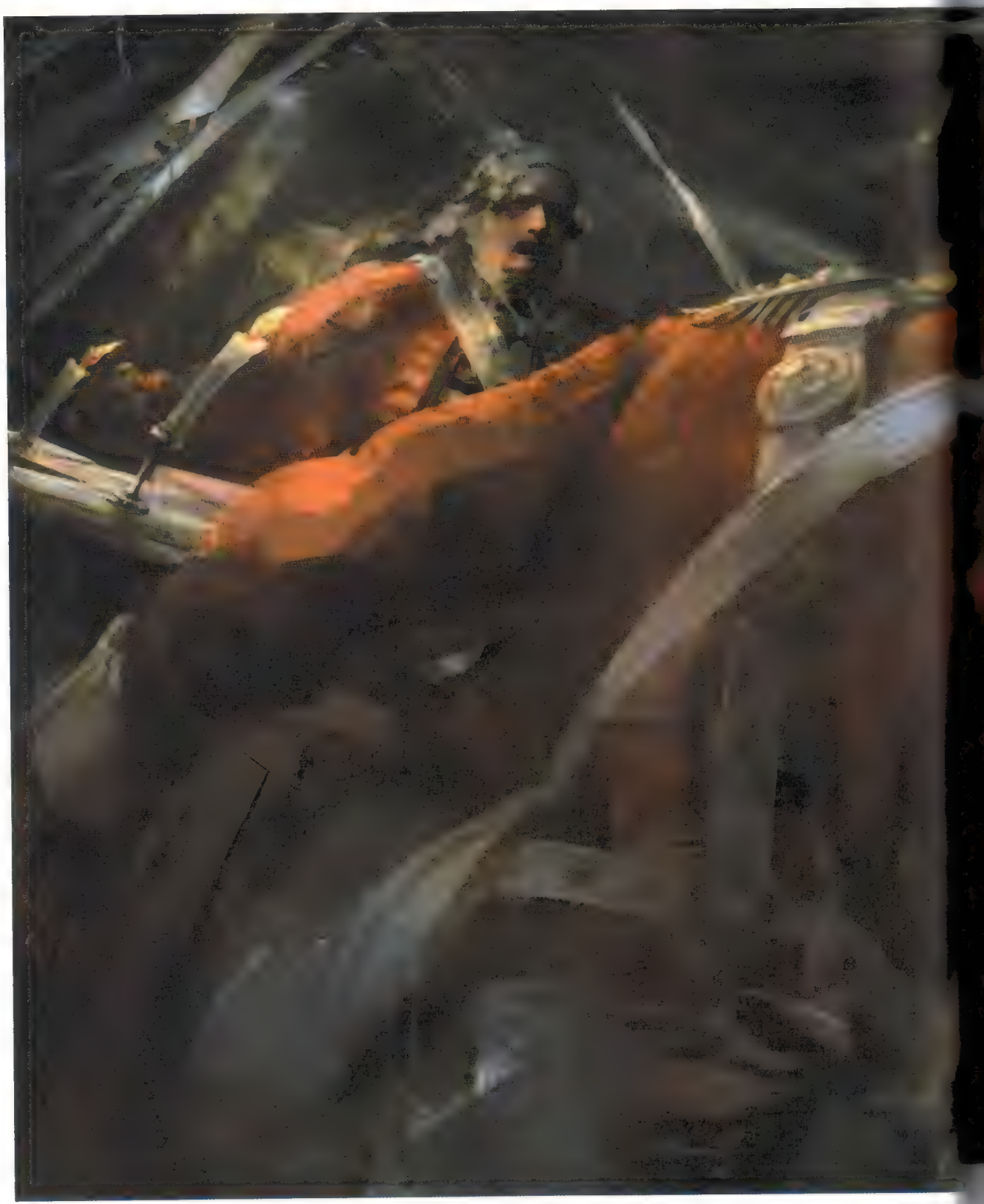
Deprived of a strong navy, the American colonists were unprepared to face the British Royal Navy which, despite its diminished might following the Seven Years War, remained the most powerful navy at the time.

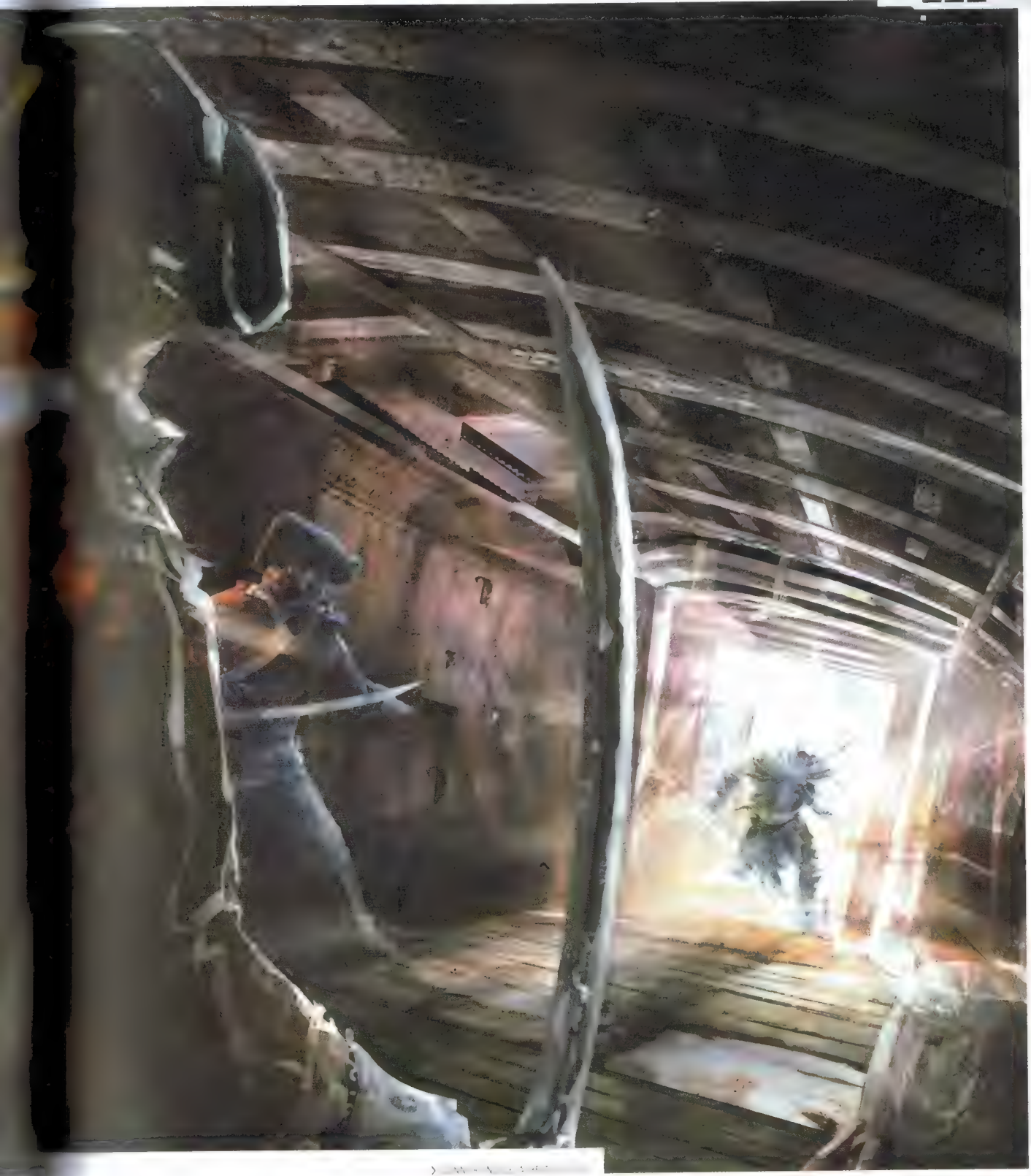
Without any significant armed ships, the Continentals relied on small private vessels, whose captains were rewarded financially to interfere with British merchant vessels. These activities proved to be very successful in disrupting the British lines of communication and commerce.

However, the relative autonomy of these private vessels gave the Templars an oppor-

to extend their influence. They hired ateers such as Nicholas Biddle and advantage of his pirating.

the Templars interfering in naval s, the Patriots desperately needed side help to take command of naval gles. France entered the war in 1778 took sides with the Patriots, provid- the Americans with a full naval force was able to compete with the British l Navy. In addition to supporting the ericans in their struggle against the sh, France also sought to oust Britain's naval forces from the West Indies. Spain and the Netherlands also contributed warships to the American cause and this combination temporarily deprived the Royal Navy of its naval superiority.





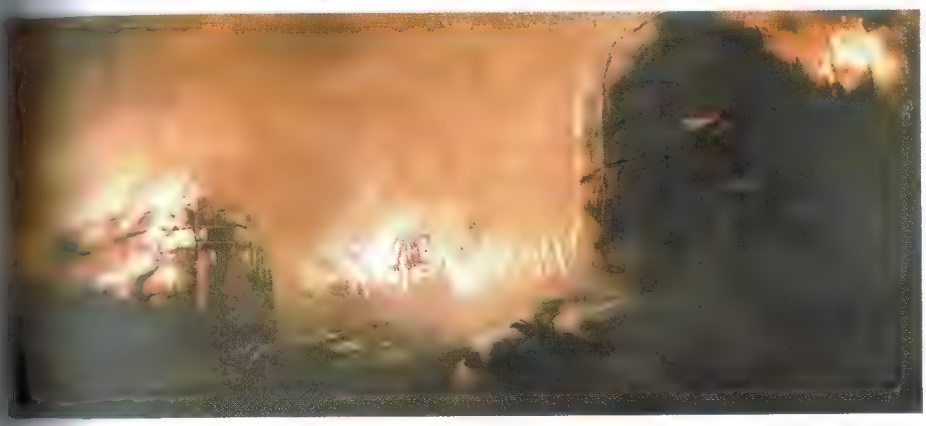
END OF THE WAR

Once the naval confrontations were in full steam, both sides concentrated their efforts on Virginia. In September of 1781, the French Navy forced the British ships to retreat from Chesapeake Bay, and the British surrendered the town of Yorktown, Virginia. Following this defeat, King George III was unable to secure further approval from the British Parliament to continue the war in America.

> NAVAL CONFRONTATION COMING TO AN END IN THE CARIBBEAN

As the Revolutionary War came to an end, the struggle between the Assassins and the Templars raged on. Connor realized the need to eliminate Templar leadership to ensure that the colonists would be free to determine their own destiny. He left New York and headed to the Templar headquarters in Fort George, intent on assassinating Charles Lee. With Lafayette's help, Connor stole inside the fort while French ships were bombarding it, but instead of finding Lee, he encountered Haytham and finally killed him after a long battle.

Connor then made his way to Boston in pursuit of Charles Lee, who managed to escape after an exchange of gunfire at the Boston shipyard. Connor chased Lee to a tavern in Philadelphia where he assassinated him on October 2, 1782. He took the amulet from Lee's neck and buried it. Connor finally succeeded in eliminating the Templar leadership in America, and simultaneously secured independence for the United States.



NATIVE AMERICANS' RELOCATION

In the aftermath of the war, America's expansion to the west seemed inevitable. It was one of the key issues that contributed to conflicts between colonists and the British authority. The pre-Revolutionary Era was full of expeditions into the western frontier, intended to push to push Native Americans out of their territory. The era was marked by the Templar William Johnson's constant initiatives to take over Iroquois land.

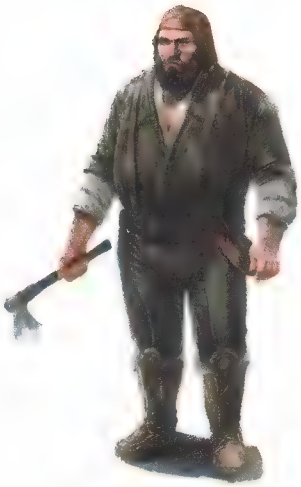
Native communities were torn over which side to support during the Revolutionary War. Most favored the British in the hope that they would contain America's expansion into their territory. American forces razed several indigenous settlements to the ground. The Sullivan Expedition of 1779 destroyed a large number of Native villages and caught the attention of the half-Native Connor. These maneuvers distanced Connor from George Washington, who had ordered these operations in his role as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army.

After the war, peace treaties were signed which bestowed an extensive amount of land to the Americans. Congress distributed lands to traders and ranchers who sought to expand their operations. Anxious to expand its borders, the new nation began to move westward, taking over areas held by Native populations, either by purchasing their land, or simply by conquering them and destroying their villages.

Connor witnessed the empty houses and the ruined villages and saw that the new American society's paradigms threatened the Native Americans' societies and their very existence.

In the aftermath of the American Revolution, Connor came to realize the contradictions found in the concepts of freedom and independence. The United States of America emerged and flourished in an environment where freedom and slavery stood side by side. Throughout the nineteenth century, the United States evolved into a nation where these concepts would constantly challenge one another, and compete to bring about different visions of the world order.

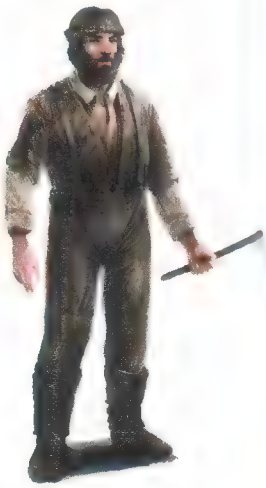
CIVILIAN AND MILITARY CLOTHING DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION



> LUMBERJACK

> ARMED

> HUNTRESS



> LUMBERJACK

> ANGRY WOMAN

> BOSTON WOMEN

› BRITISH SOLDIER

› PATRIOT SOLDIER

› HESSIAN SOLDIER

› HORSEMAN

› MINUTE MAN

› NATIVE AMERICAN WARRIOR

› SNIPER

› COLONIAL OFFICER

› PATRIOT SOLDIER

2
#E

SPANISH LOUISIANA

NEW ORLEANS SLAVE SOCIETY

Immediately after the French founded the city of New Orleans in 1718, slavery was introduced to Louisiana via a private corporation called the Company of the West. In 1724, the French government passed the *Code Noir*, which was a set of laws that defined slavery in the colony. Following early efforts to develop slave plantations, slave trade expanded during the French colonial period and continued under Spanish rule.

> SLAVE TRADE IN NEW ORLEANS

SPANISH RULE

After the French defeat in the Seven Year War in North America (1756 – 1763), Louisiana was taken from France, and divided between the Spanish and British Empires. The transition from French colonial control to Spanish occupation left the residents of New Orleans dissatisfied with Spain's weak political authority, as it tried to distance itself from the previous French administrative structure.

This ambiguous and unstable political environment allowed the Templars to plot a takeover of New Orleans. In 1765, French Governor Jean-Jacques Blaise d'Abbadie negotiated with the Templar Rafael Joaquìn de Ferrer in order to remain governor after the transfer of the colony, but Aveline de Grandpré, an Assassin operating in New Orleans, uncovered the plot and killed him.

Later, de Ferrer made a deal with a dissident Assassin from Saint-Domingue named Baptiste, who hoped to join the Templar Order. Baptiste passed himself for the late François Mackandal to attract followers to his cause, attempted to control smuggling operations in the bayou, and plotted to poison the French nobles of New Orleans. His main goal, however, was to force the Assassin Agaté, Aveline's mentor, out of hiding. As a result of Aveline's intervention, however, he failed.

> NEW ORLEANS REBELS OPPOSING SPANISH GOVERNOR LUIS DE UNZAGA'S REGIME

LOUISIANA REBELLION OF 1768

In 1766, the Templar Antonio de Ulloa arrived in New Orleans to serve as the Spanish governor of West Louisiana. However, he allowed the French flag to remain over the city and left the administration of the territory to French Creole officials. Two years later, he implemented rigid trade restrictions within the colony, and secretly organized the shipment of slaves and vagrants to a Templar worksite in Mexico. French Creoles rebelled against his regime.

During this period, Agaté, Aveline's mentor, ordered her to eliminate Governor de Ulloa in order to put an end to Templar control in the region. Aveline ambushed the governor's carriage and confronted him, but after learning that slaves from New Orleans had been taken to Mexico, she stayed her blade and let de Ulloa leave with his pregnant wife. In return, de Ulloa gave her a lens used to decipher coded Templar documents, and a map that would lead her to the Templar worksite of Chichén Itzá.

When Agaté learned that Aveline had disobeyed his order to kill de Ulloa, his trust in her was shattered. Acting on the information gained from the Templar governor—and against her mentor's consent—Aveline made her way south to Mexico.

On November 1, 1768, while Aveline was away, the Spanish Crown, with the approval of the French King, commissioned de Ulloa's replacement, General Alejandro O'Reilly, to suppress the rebellion in New Orleans. To prevent bloodshed, French Creole leaders urged the residents of the city to avoid military confrontation and accept Spanish authority. O'Reilly arrived in New Orleans without any major interference and created the Laws of the Castile, which introduced a series of harsh reforms to punish the rebels who had forced the first governor out of the territory.

EXPEDITION TO CHICHÉN ITZÁ

Aveline de Grandpré firmly believed that her main tasks as an Assassin were to free slaves, impose justice, and defeat the Templars. Disguising herself as a slave, she boarded a ship bound for Mexico and pursued these goals all the way to Chichén Itzá.

While exploring the Templar-controlled community at Chichén Itzá, Aveline met a rebellious slave claiming to have met a woman who wore a locket just like the one Aveline's mother had given her. Like her mother before her, who had disappeared from New Orleans years earlier, the woman was called Jeanne. Intrigued, Aveline investigated and found proof that her mother was indeed in Chichén Itzá. Among Jeanne's belongings, she found a page of her diary and a map revealing the location of an ancient artifact.

Aveline followed the map, navigating through caves and cenotes, and eventually found her way to a ruined chamber built by the First Civilization. After entering the precursor site, Aveline came upon a fragment of the Prophecy Disk, a First Civilization artifact, and then killed Rafael Joaquín de Ferrer, who was overseeing the Templar expedition.

As she made her way deeper into the caves, Aveline was finally reunited with her mother after years of separation. However, when Jeanne realized that she was an Assassin, she became fearful, and was convinced that Agaté had sent his mentee to Mexico to kill her. Jeanne warned Aveline that the Disk should stay out of Agaté's hands and escaped, leaving Aveline to ponder.

RETURN TO NEW ORLEANS

Returning home after more than two years, Aveline reacquainted herself with the troubles in New Orleans. Following the turmoil of 1768, Spanish control over the city was firm. However, it appeared that Spanish laws and activities collided with

› AVELINE INSIDE A FIRST CIVILIZATION CAVE

› AVELINE ON THE THIRD FLOOR OF AGATÉ'S HUT IN THE NEW ORLEANS BAYOU

...assin interests. It seemed as though the Templar hold on New Orleans was over, but Gérald, Aveline's trusted friend and fellow Assassin, informed her that someone was bribing Spanish soldiers. After investigating, Aveline discovered that a man named Vázquez was using Spanish troops to take control of the bayou.

Vázquez' plan was to gain control over smuggling operations in the bayou, and no doubt he would eventually discover Agaté's secret hideout. Believing that Vázquez was the "Company Man" referred to by de Soto in Chichén Itzá, Aveline immediately headed to Agaté's hut in the heart of the bayou to warn him of the danger. To protect her mentor and smuggler allies, Aveline eliminated Vázquez' men before returning to Chichén Itzá.

SECOND EXPEDITION TO CHICHÉN ITZÁ

Having returned to Chichén Itzá, Aveline made peace with her mother, who gave her a map that guided her to a canoe inside a cenote. After navigating through various tunnels and chambers, Aveline retrieved a second shard of the First Civilization Disk. Although Aveline offered to take her mother back to New Orleans, Jeanne decided to remain behind, to take care of the ex-slave community, which was now free of the Templars.

› AVELINE SWIMMING HER WAY THROUGH THE FIRST CIVILIZATION CENOTES AND CHAMBERS

THE COMPANY MAN

Aveline returned to New Orleans, successfully infiltrating slave trader organizations and, with Gérald's help, increasing her network of contacts. Her stepmother, Madeleine de L'Isle, aware of her ambition to free slaves, asked Aveline to help a slave named George escape north. While searching for a safe passage for George, the Assassin also helped smugglers Élise Lafleur and Roussillon provide supplies to the American Patriots on behalf of the Spanish governor.

By then Vázquez had again several Spanish soldiers under his control. He then tried to stop Aveline, George, and the smugglers, however, without success. Aveline was able to help George and made sure the supplies reached their destination. Meanwhile Aveline uncovered evidence that would lead her to Vázquez, who she now believed to be the Company Man.

Some time later, Aveline went to the governor's ball, confident that Vázquez would be there. Using her charms, she located Vasquez. She made him sign her dance card before dancing with him then luring him away from the crowd to assassinate him. With his dying breath, Vázquez revealed that he was not the Company Man. That same evening, Aveline learned that her father, who had been sick, had passed away.

Defeated, but still resolved to uncover the identity of the head of the Templar Order in Louisiana, Aveline was pleased when Gérald received special intelligence informing them that a Templar working for the Company Man had been discovered in the New York countryside. Aveline immediately headed north to find a Loyalist officer named Davidson from Lord Dunmore's Ethiopian Regiment.

> SMUGGLERS PLANTATION

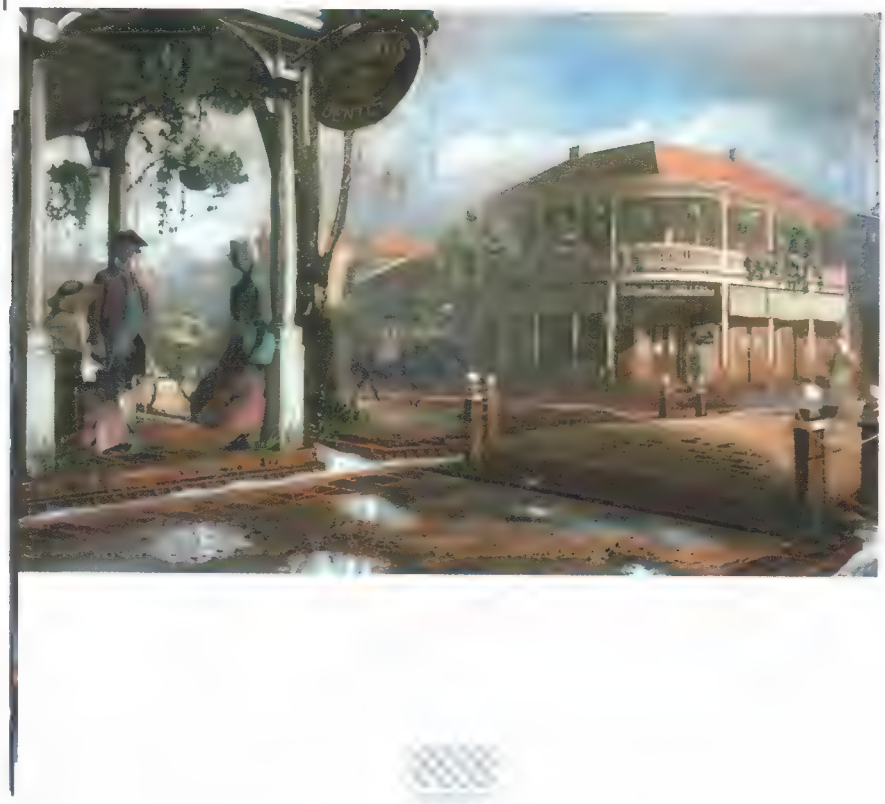
TRIP TO NEW YORK

In 1777, Aveline reached the New York frontier and met Connor, an Assassin who fought the Templars during the American colonists' struggle against Great Britain. The two Assassins traveled through the New York frontier until they reached a fort which Davidson used as his headquarters.

While Connor distracted Davidson's men, fighting them in the open, Aveline stealthily made her way to her target. She was shocked to discover that Davidson and George, the slave she had helped escape north, were one and the same. Officer George Davidson was a Templar fighting for the British in exchange for his freedom. Through him, Aveline finally learned the identity of the Company Man.

> AVELINE AND CONNOR ON THE NEW YORK FRONTIER

› AVELINE AT AGATÉ'S [illegible] IN THE BAYOU



FAMILIAR FACES

Aveline returned to Louisiana and made her way to her family's mansion, where she confronted her stepmother, Madeleine de L'Isle, the Company Man and head of the Templar Order in Louisiana.

Aveline and Madeleine discussed their history. Only then did Aveline realize that her stepmother had subtly manipulated her throughout her life. Madeleine had used her stepdaughter's status and activities as an Assassin to eliminate rival Templars and increase her power and influence. Madeleine also believed that she and Aveline shared similar goals and ideals, including liberty and freedom for everyone. Now that Aveline had all but cut the ties to her mentor, she suggested that they join forces.

Soon after, Aveline headed back to the bayou to talk to Agaté and inform him of the identity of the Company Man. After a heated argument, and unable to admit his failings and sense of betrayal, Agaté pulled a weapon and attacked Aveline. As they struggled, Aveline attempted to convince her mentor to leave New Orleans, for his own safety. Rather than live

the dishonor, and believing that his mentee had ...ed with the Templars, Agaté plunged to his death. ...ne reached out to grab him, but she was only ... grasp his necklace, which tore from his neck.

...wing Agaté's death, Aveline saw an opportunity ... infiltrate the Templar Order and destroy it from ...n. She went to the Saint Louis Cathedral and ...red Agaté's necklace to Madeleine as proof of her ...ance.

... being inducted into the Templar Order, Aveline ... the two halves of the Prophecy Disk to her step- ...her, who placed them side by side on an altar. ...eleine then added a central piece, which held ... halves of the Disk together. The artifact was an ...ent communication device, capable of recording ...te conversations. However, Madeleine could ... make sense of the scrambled First Civilization ... and refused to believe that there was still a part missing to the puzzle. Frustrated, she began to pace the floor.

Aveline realized that the time was right to attack Madeleine and reclaim the Disk. After killing the Templars who had been present during her induction, she reached for her stepmother and assassinated her, successfully completing her plan to rid Louisiana of the Templars.

Alone at the altar, Aveline took Jeanne's locket, which her mother called her "Heart", and connected it to the assembled Prophecy Disk. Ancient voices could be heard again, but this time the message was clear.

› AVELINE NEAR SAINT LOUIS CATHEDRAL IN JACKSON SQUARE, NEW ORLEANS

CIVILIAN AND MILITARY CLOTHING DURING THE SPANISH OCCUPATION OF LOUISIANA

> PLANTATION OWNER

> FARMER

> SHOPSMITH

> WITCH DOCTOR

> HOUSE SLAVES

> SPANISH SEEKER

> SPANISH BRUTE

> SPANISH LEADER

> SPANISH SOLDIER

> FRENCH LEADER

> FRENCH SOLDIER

> FRENCH SEEKER

2
#F

IMPERIAL RUSSIA

The Russian Empire was officially established in 1721 by Peter I the Great in an effort to modernize Russia in response to social and technological progress in Western Europe. The newfound empire was ruled by the Romanov dynasty, whose sovereigns assumed the title of "Tsar", a Slavic term hailing back to the Roman title "Caesar". Under the tsars, Russia became the second largest contiguous empire in history through the seizure of neighboring regions.

Although monarchs such as Peter I and Catherine the Great worked towards reforming and refining Russia's culture and infrastructure, industrialization aggravated the divide between the wealthy minority and the vast, impoverished peasantry. Many peasants, once serfs bound to aristocratic landlords, were emancipated in the 19th century only to be trapped by high taxes and little opportunity for social mobility. Laborers throughout the empire also faced poor working conditions with little recognition or protection from the imperial government. The worsening struggle between the interests of nobles and workers threatened to hurl the empire into chaos and obliterate the imperial order. Towards the end of World War I, Russia's economy was in shambles, and the empire on the verge of a civil war that would spell the end of the Romanov autocracy.

THE FALL

The late 1800s gave witness to the fall of Tsar Alexander II—an ally of the Templars—and the rise of his son Alexander III. The revolutionary group responsible for Alexander II's murder was the *Nar-*

nárnaya Volya ("The People's Will"), a guild of Russian Assassins, whose mission included weakening Templar power in the empire. When the ascension of Alexander III to the throne bolstered that power, the Assassins sent Nikolai Orelov to end his life. On October, 29, 1888, Orelov pursued and boarded the high speed train carrying the Tsar from Crimea to St. Petersburg, but was caught off guard when he came across Alexander's family, having been told the monarch would be traveling alone. Tsar Alexander surprised Orelov and easily held his own in the fight that followed, suffering only a wound to his abdomen from the Assassin's hidden blade before the train unexpectedly derailed. Alexander continued to attack Orelov amidst the wreckage before revealing to him that the Imperial Staff was more than a simple symbol of authority—it was in truth a Piece of Eden. The Tsar even challenged Orelov to fight him with the artifact, only to overpower him again. Alexander, however, let Orelov live—refusing to take his life in front of his children.

After the death of Alexander III in 1894, his son Nicholas II assumed the throne. Meanwhile the Assassins continued to gather intelligence on the Imperial Staff. In 1908, Orelov finally learned its location by interrogating a captured Templar agent named Dolinsky. Orelov set off with fellow Assassins to destroy the Staff at the Tunguska facility. They cleared the facility, but were caught in the explosion triggered by their ally Nikola Tesla, who detonated the Staff from America using Teleforce technology. Orelov was the sole survivor.

Nine years later, the revolutionary leader Vladimir Lenin contacted Orelov to request the assassination of Nicholas II in order to put an end to the imperial regime. Orelov confronted the deposed tsar in his palace to determine if the Staff had survived the Tunguska explosion. Upon concluding that Nicholas' Imperial Staff was only a replica, Orelov decided to spare his life. Shortly after, the Assassin tracked down the only known surviving shard of the Staff, a splinter of the artifact buried with Grigori Rasputin. Orelov then immigrated to America with his wife and daughter.

2
#G

RECENT HISTORY

THE GREAT PURGE

In October of 2000, Daniel Cross, a Templar sleeper agent who had been accepted into the Assassin Brotherhood, killed the Mentor. This event, considered one of the greatest feats ever achieved by a Templar agent, threw the Brotherhood in turmoil. Cross not only murdered the organization's leader, but shortly thereafter he also revealed the location of several Assassin compounds hidden throughout the world—including desert bases in Arizona, New Mexico, South Dakota and Texas.

No sooner had the Templars learned about these sites that they launched a series of simultaneous attacks targeting them. Their agents successfully eradicated most of the Assassin bases, thus instilling a near fatal blow to an already shaken Brotherhood. The Templars dubbed the operation "the Great Purge".

Since then, the Assassin Brotherhood has been but a mere shadow of what it once was. Still, many Assassins survived the Great Purge, and not all of their hideouts had been uncovered. Toiling to rebuild the Brotherhood—or at least make the organization as strong as it had been at the end of the 20th century—many Assassins continued to fight for what they believed was a just cause.

DESMOND MILES

Raised since birth in a caring but isolated Assassin commune called «The Farm», Desmond Miles eventually rebelled against what he perceived to be a dry and sterile lifestyle and ran away, settling in New York City. Relying on the skills he had learned while growing up, Desmond built a new life there, one devoid of anything related to Templars, Assassins or conspiracies.

ABSTERGO INDUSTRIES

In September 2012, Abstergo Industries captured Desmond Miles and delivered him to Warren Vidic, head of genetic research, as the 17th test subject for the Animus Project. Their interest in Desmond centered on his genetic pedigree, which stretched back to his ancestor Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad, a Middle Eastern Assassin born in the 12th century. Using the Animus to explore Desmond's genetic memory, Vidic forced Desmond to investigate one specific moment

of his ancestor's life in order to learn the location of ancient technology, called Pieces of Eden. The targeted memory, however, could not be accessed immediately, and it was decided that Desmond would need to start observing Altaïr's memories from an earlier point and gradually work towards the desired information.

Vidic intended to keep Desmond in the Animus for prolonged stretches of time due to impending deadlines, but Lucy Stillman, his assistant, firmly protested, citing the psychological damage such an approach had caused to Desmond's predecessor, Subject 16. Vidic relented and gave Desmond daily precautionary breaks from the Animus, which allowed him to explore the facility and interact with Lucy. In contrast to Vidic's harsh, driven approach, Lucy was far more considerate to Desmond and made several efforts to supply him with insight into the truth behind Abstergo. Desmond followed the clues Lucy left for him during his breaks, gaining free range of the facility and access to its computers. He soon realized that Abstergo was the modern front of the Knights Templar, the Assassins' age-old enemies. When a group of Assassins attacked Abstergo to free Desmond and were promptly eliminated by the facility's security detail, Desmond was devastated. Lucy reassured him by quietly revealing that she was also an Assassin, working as a mole within Abstergo—proof that he was not actually alone.

The following day, Desmond's target memory was unlocked, and he witnessed Altaïr receive a map detailing the locations of various artifacts—exactly what Vidic had been searching for. Abstergo initiated its campaign to recover the Pieces of Eden and Vidic's superiors ordered Desmond's execution. However, Lucy intervened on the pretense that Desmond might be needed for more information in the future. Vidic agreed, and he was spared.

THE GLYPHS—ESCAPE FROM ABSTERGO

As Abstergo agents mobilized to locate Pieces of Eden scattered throughout the world, Desmond discovered that the memories of his ancestors were not all he had gained from his Animus sessions. During his time navigating through the memories of Altaïr, Desmond had learned of the

Assassin's sixth sense, called Eagle Vision, which allowed him to perceive things that were invisible to other humans. As Altaïr's descendent, Desmond also possessed the genetic potential for Eagle Vision, which was triggered through the Bleeding Effect caused by his time in the Animus. Alone in the research wing where he was being held, Desmond used his newly acquired ability and found the area covered in unsettling glyphs which had once been painted on the walls and floor but could no longer be seen through normal vision. The worst of the puzzling graffiti was on the wall of his holding cell, plastered from side to side with symbols and cryptic messages. On closer inspection, Desmond realized that the glyphs had been painted with blood, probably that of Subject 16, the captive who preceded him.

Lucy returned to Desmond's cell, with blood splattered on her shirt. She insisted that they needed to escape as soon as they obtained vital information still locked within Desmond's mind, and then asked him to enter the Animus one more time. Using the machine and syncing it with the closest genetic match she could find between Desmond and Subject 16, Lucy located the memories of their mutual Renaissance ancestor, Ezio Auditore.

Once the genetic link confirmed, Desmond was ejected from the Animus and Lucy stole its memory core before leading the way through Abstergo's labyrinthine corridors. Dispatching guards and using her employee card to bypass security markers, Lucy told Desmond that she suspected the conflict between the Assassins and Templars was only part of a larger, looming crisis, and that they needed to learn more. They made their way through the suite of Animi built for Abstergo's upcoming training program and, to Lucy's surprise, Desmond used his new ability to break through a code-locked door. They then escaped the facility.

THE HIDEOUT—MINERVA'S MESSAGE

Lucy brought Desmond to an Assassin hideout in Italy in order to elude the Templars. There he met two other Assassins: Shaun Hastings, a historian, and Rebecca Crane, a technical expert responsible for maintaining the Animus 2.0—the Assassins' version of the device. Lucy offered to train Desmond as a full-fledged Assassin in return for his help in fighting the Templars, intending to use the Bleeding Effect resulting from Animus usage to transfer to Desmond all the skill and experience of his ancestor. Desmond accepted, determined to prevent a Templar victory. Desmond entered the Animus, which Rebecca herself had built, this time as a willing participant.

As he explored the life of Ezio, Desmond showed excellent signs of adaptation, and in time Lucy relieved him from the Animus to test his skill retention. Now a fully capable free-runner, Desmond practiced his new skills by activating the hideout security system while Lucy elaborated on her belief that Ezio's memories would shed light on the bigger picture behind the Pieces of Eden. However, Desmond's improved synchronicity did not end with his new abilities, as he went from hallucinating mildly to plunging completely into one of Altaïr's memories while outside the Animus.

During this process the team discovered a series of anomalies in the code; actual messages left by Subject 16 on the original Animus' data core, which had been transferred to the Animus 2.0. As Desmond tracked down the anomalies and investigated further, he discovered a wealth of cryptic information about the history of the Templars and Assassins.

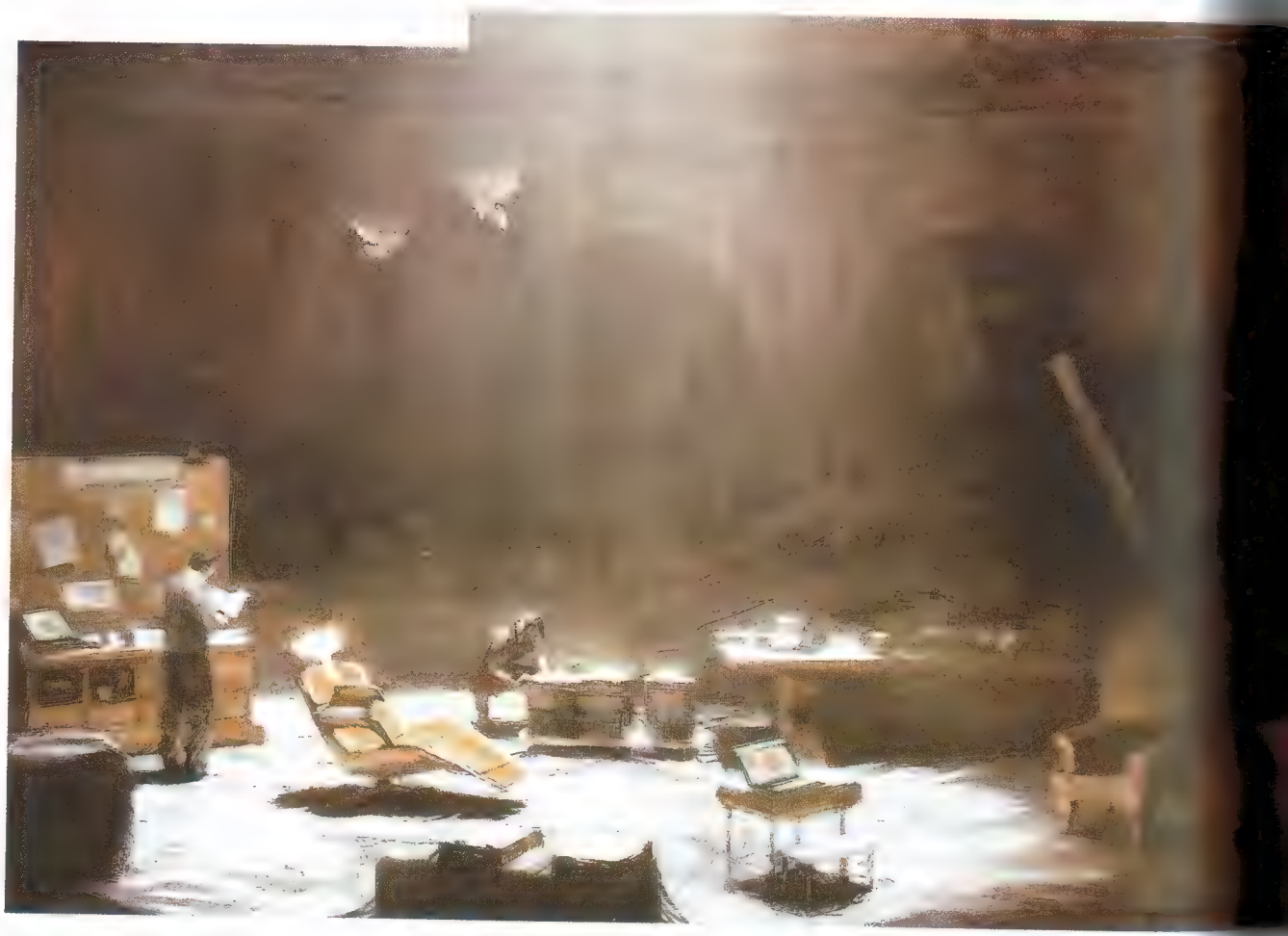
He was eventually shown a memory featuring two human beings running through a futuristic complex—though the video was dated to a time long before the birth of Christ.

Desmond eventually witnessed one of Ezio's memories, which saw him taking an Apple of Eden to a secret vault underneath the Sistine Chapel in Rome. There, Ezio was confronted by an image of a woman calling herself Minerva, who talked of an ancient war between the humans and a race known only as Those Who Came Before—among whom Minerva counted herself—and a great catastrophe which had followed. It was Minerva's people who had created the Pieces of Eden, as well as humanity. Minerva then addressed not Ezio but *Desmond himself* through his ancestor, warning him of another terrible disaster which was soon to come unless he took action to prevent it.

Desmond experienced this memory moments before Abstergo operatives, accompanied by Warren Vidic, stormed their hideout. As Rebecca and Shaun prepared their equipment for evacuation, Lucy a Desmond broke the Templar attack and confron Vidic, who fled upon seeing his men defeated. T team then began their trip towards a new safe ho where they hoped to place Desmond into the An mus again.

MONTERIGGIONI

Lucy drove the truck carrying her fellow Assassin and their equipment to Monteriggioni, Italy, t up a new safe house in the Sanctuary of the Vill Auditore. The Sanctuary's interior was shielde against surveillance from Abstergo-owned cell to ers, so the team believed they would be safe there They soon discovered that the Sanctuary's entranc was blocked from within, but Lucy and Desmond found an alternative route via an underground pa sage through the remains of the Auditore famil crypt. With the entrance unblocked, the Assassi hid their vehicle and moved their operation into the



Sanctuary, where Desmond was reinserted into the Animus to continue exploring Ezio's memories.

The team hoped to eventually discover the location of the Apple of Eden that had been in Ezio's possession. Desmond began immediately where he had left off, after Ezio's encounter with Minerva, and continued to explore his ancestor's life. Again he encountered codes left by Subject 16. When put together and run as an executable within the Animus program, these codes transported Desmond to a mysterious place, where he encountered an image of Subject 16—who seemingly maintained some form of existence within the Animus. Subject 16 alluded to the necessity of finding a woman called Eve before he disappeared, causing Desmond to reawaken.

Desmond eventually witnessed Ezio place the Apple in a secret temple, which could be accessed through the Colosseum in Rome.

COLOSSEUM VAULT

The Assassins packed up their gear and headed to the city. At the Colosseum, Desmond journeyed through the ruins and heard the voice of Juno—one of Those Who Came Before—who briefly expanded upon Minerva's warnings. Desmond eventually found his way to the Santa Maria Aracoeli Basilica—which according to myth had been built upon a temple of Juno. He then let the others inside and, after manipulating a series of switches that revealed a technologically advanced elevator, they descended into a great vault.

After navigating through the labyrinth and using a password Shaun had deduced from a clue left in the Sanctuary by Ezio, they reached the final resting place of the Apple. As Desmond reached out to take it, he felt himself seized by a powerful force. Unable to control himself, he could only look on in horror as Juno compelled him to stab Lucy.

The strain of the encounter with Juno rendered Desmond unconscious, and he collapsed into a coma next to Lucy's body. William M. arrived shortly after, and took Desmond back to the temporary hideout, where he was reinserted into the Animus in an attempt to reverse the damage caused by Juno's actions. Without delay, William organized the transfer of the Animus—and Desmond—to a new location in North America. He left with Rebecca while Shaun stayed behind to organize Lucy's burial.

His mind locked within the confines of the Animus, Desmond was confronted with the realities of his past, having been raised as a child of the Brotherhood. Revisiting his childhood experiences and contemplating them in the light of his recent experiences served as a starting point in Desmond's mending process. He finally began to understand who and what he was. With Subject 16's assistance, Desmond ultimately stood ready to reclaim his mind.

INSIDE THE FIRST CIVILIZATION TEMPLE

On October 30, 2012, Desmond Miles and his team – Rebecca Crane, Shaun Hastings, and William Miles – arrived at a Temple built by Those Who Came Before. Desmond inserted the Apple of Eden into the wall, which opened a door taking them deeper into the Temple.

They saw images of the First Civilization depicting death, destruction, flames and debris. The group made their way down the tunnel and a section of the wall retracted. As they moved forward, the group saw a glowing pedestal emerging on the ground. The light gradually became brighter until it lit up the entire Temple structure.

As they approached another pedestal with a circular indentation on it, the voice of First Civilization Juno whispered in Desmond's ear, urging him to find a key. Desmond then collapsed, entering a state of transformation that took him back across time to experience the memory of his ancestor, Haytham Kenway.

THE QUEST FOR THE POWER SOURCE IN MANHATTAN

Desmond realized that the key Juno referred to was the amulet that his ancestor, Haytham Kenway, had taken from the London Opera House in 1754. In addition to finding the amulet, Desmond needed to locate three power sources in order to enter new sections of the Temple. Shaun Hastings located the first power source in a Manhattan skyscraper, and Desmond set out to retrieve it, despite the risk inherent in this perilous mission.

Although heavily guarded, Desmond was able to enter the adjacent building while Rebecca Crane distracted the security guards with fireworks. A large part of the structure was under construction, and while this facilitated its access, it also made the mission more dangerous for Desmond. He made his way carefully to the top and then parachuted himself on the roof of the building where the power source was located. He then entered the penthouse office suite, where he encountered Daniel Cross, a member of the Templar Order. Desmond was able to knock him out and escape with the power source.

DESMOND HEADS TO BRAZIL

On December 1, 2012, Desmond chased down the second power source located in a sports stadium in Brazil. Intelligence gathered by Rebecca Crane stated that the power source was being worn as a bracelet by a woman inside a VIP booth in the upper levels of the arena. Having noticed the abundance of security guards, Desmond realized that Abstergo was expecting him. The guards had established a number of checkpoints, and were closely patrolling the stadium. Desmond was forced to find a different way into the room.

Desmond saw an opportunity to bypass the security checkpoint, and entered the arena. After crossing the entire stadium, he entered the VIP room only to find Daniel Cross with the power source in hand. Cross pulled a gun and tried to shoot at Desmond, but quickly realized that he had used up all his bullets killing the others in the room.

Using his Eagle Vision, Desmond chased Cross, who was now in a state of utter distress. Desmond managed to snatch the power source from him before making his escape through the subway. Cross chased after the subway car and tried to stop it from leaving, but it was too late. Desmond now possessed two of the three power sources.

DESMOND AT ABSTERGO

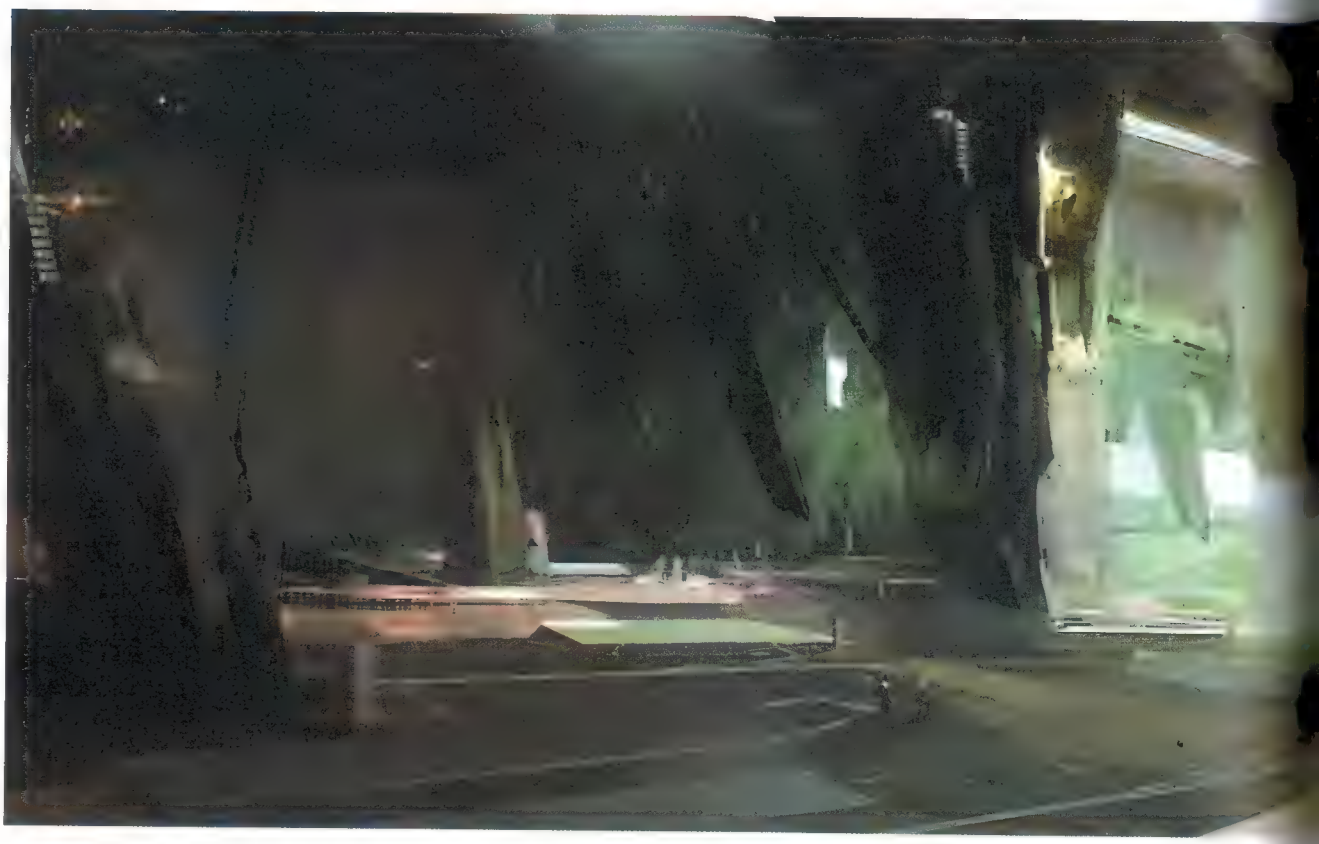
After completing a session in the Animus, Desmond was ready to retrieve the final power source. Shaun Hastings confirmed the location of the battery in Cairo, Egypt. However, time was running out and the group needed to follow Connor's memories to find the key. William Miles then volunteered to collect the power source while Desmond continued through Connor's journey during the American Revolutionary War, searching for the amulet.

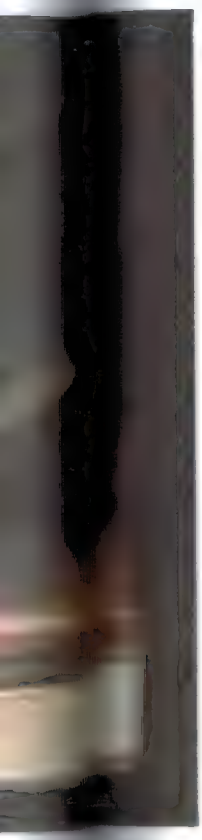
Egypt turned out to be a trap, and William was promptly captured by Abstergo Industries agents and brought to their facility in Italy, where Desmond had been held previously. Dr. Warren Vidic hoped to use Desmond's father as a hostage in exchange for the Apple of Eden. Though they discussed the possibility of finding another power source and leaving William to fend for himself, Desmond, Rebecca, and Shaun travelled to Italy to save William from their Templar enemies.

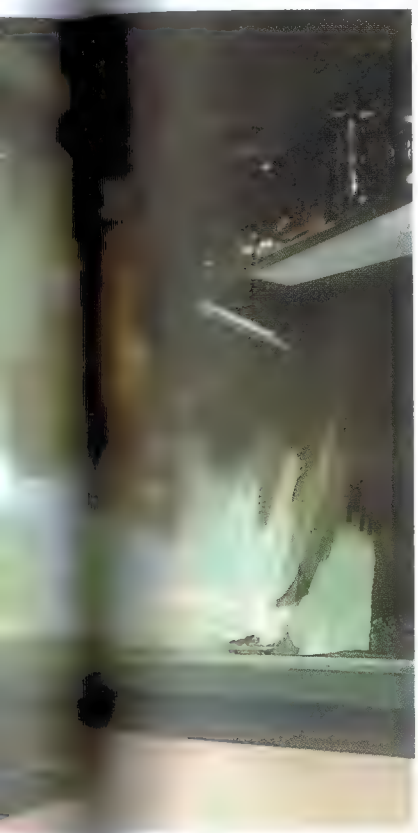
On December 12, 2012, Desmond entered the lobby of the Abstergo Industries building, attempting to blend in with the crowd, but knowing too well that Abstergo was aware of his arrival. He was quickly discovered by the employees, who immediately alerted the security guards. Desmond fled to the elevator in order to reach the fourth floor where he believed William was being held. Vidic was able to stop the elevator, forcing Desmond to open its roof and climb the rest of the way.

Desmond struggled past several guards and entered the room where he believed his father was being held. Instead, he found Daniel Cross waiting for him. Cross shot at Desmond from across the room, but before he could close in on Desmond, he began to experience intense seizures and hallucinations, which caused him to flee the room. Urged on by Rececca, Desmond chased an agitated and trigger-happy Cross through the corridors. Cross's pain became intolerable and Desmond was able to catch up with him and put him out of his misery.

Desmond rushed to the fifth floor to pursue Dr. Vidic and was met by a large number of Abstergo agents. After deftly escaping, Desmond found Vidic in his office, along with his father and a dozen armed guards. Desmond brought out the Apple of Eden and used its power to force the guards to aim their weapons at Vidic. This second use of the Apple forced them to shoot Vidic before turning their weapons on themselves. After seeing for himself the full power of the Apple, Desmond freed his father and they took the third and final power source from Vidic's desk.







END OF THE WORLD POSTPONED

Desmond returned to the Animus to discover the location of the key. After eradicating the Templar leadership during the American Revolution, Desmond's ancestor, Connor, took possession of the amulet and buried it, according to First Civilization's Juno's orders. Back in the present, Desmond retrieved the amulet located in the United States.

Soon afterwards, Desmond returned to the Temple and restored the site's power. He connected all the batteries and powered up the entire place. When the final pedestal was triggered, Desmond saw visions of the Earth during the First Civilization engulfed in fire and smoke, images of a dying world filled with despair and darkness.

Afterwards, Desmond was given a chance to avoid a similar tragedy, but was faced with a difficult choice between the wishes of First Civilization Juno and Minerva. Should he side with Minerva and start the world anew, Minerva showed how Desmond would become a symbol of those who survived the old world, and be worshipped as a demigod and prophet while the Earth rebuilt itself.

However, these same visions showed that the message of the Assassins would be altered in the centuries to follow. Through religious texts covered in Assassin symbols, new doctrines would arise that bore no resemblance to the authentic values of the Brotherhood. Massive armies would be raised around the world, fueling new cycles of hatred.

Desmond hesitated before choosing whether to save the world, thus freeing Juno, or to end the world. Desmond and his group were suspicious of Juno's intentions and questioned the distance between Juno and Minerva. In spite of the destructive potential of Juno's plans, Desmond had no desire to be responsible for the end of the world and its total reconstruction. Despite the danger to the future of the human race, Desmond paid with his life and chose to free Juno. Desmond was convinced that Juno could eventually be defeated, whereas with Armageddon, there was no return possible.

Soon afterwards, the sky began to shimmer, reminiscent of an aurora borealis. The Earth's atmosphere suffered raging electrical strorms, while massive seismic activity shook the ground below, increasing in intensity until suddenly the sky became clear and quiet. The world was saved.

With Desmond's death, the First Civilization Temple began to undergo major transformations, resurrecting ancient devices and structures. Desmond had played his part by sacrificing his own life, and now Juno could start to impose her plan.

CH

HARACTERS

PART # 3

3 : A

DESMOND MILES

Born in 1987

The descendant of the Assassins Aquilus, Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad, Ezio Auditore, and Ratonhnhaké:ton, Desmond Miles (born in 1987) was a member of the Assassin Brotherhood who left the organization when he was a teenager. In September 2012, he was captured by Abstergo Industries and forced to relive the memories of his ancestors through a machine called the Animus. Desmond later escaped and began to work with a small group of Assassins, returning to the Animus in order to help them circumvent the Templars' plans.

Desmond was born on "The Farm", a remote compound in the Black Hills of South Dakota inhabited by approximately 30 Assassins. His parents, both Assassins themselves, attempted to raise Desmond and train him in the ways of the Brotherhood, but their insistence on restricting him to the compound along with strenuous survival training techniques served to alienate their son. To Desmond, the Farm became more prison than home and his parents little better than jailers did . On his sixteenth birthday birthday he decided to leave.

Aware of the existence of the Templars and fearful that the Assassins might try to return him to the Farm, Desmond hitchhiked across the country before settling down in New York City. Never using his real name and always paying in cash, he avoided both Assassins and Templars for nine years. The Farm's training had actually prepared him admirably well for life in the big city and Desmond thrived in New York, taking up any job available as a stepping stone to living his life to the fullest. He particularly enjoyed the lack of fear and paranoia, which had been ever-present within the Assassin compound. Despite loving his newfound freedom, Desmond also

realized that he missed his family, something which he hated himself for. In September 2012, however, a fingerprint he gave for a motorcycle license brought him to the attention of the Templars, who found Desmond working as a bartender. He was kidnapped and brought to an Abstergo facility in Italy.

Desmond was delivered to Warren Vidic, head of genetic research at Abstergo Industries, and given the designation Subject 17. Vidic and his assistant, Lucy Stillman, placed Desmond in the Animus, a machine designed to allow its subjects to experience the genetically imprinted memories of their ancestors. Abstergo's original intent was to force Desmond to explore a specific memory from one particular ancestor, the 12th century Middle-Eastern Assassin Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad, which might indicate the location of artifacts known as Pieces of Eden. Vidic's attempts to immediately access this memory failed, however, as Desmond's subconscious resisted. It was therefore decided that it would be necessary to start observing Altaïr's memories from an earlier point and work through to the desired information. For the next several days, Desmond spent much of his time in the Animus, reliving Altaïr's struggle with the Templars during the Third Crusade.

While he was not in the Animus, Desmond, with Lucy's help, managed to secretly gain the freedom to wander the laboratory. By reading through Vidic's e-mails, accessed using a pick-pocketed code pen, he began to glean some insight into the Templars' plans. He also learned something about Subject 16, his predecessor in the Animus, who had been driven insane by overexposure to the device through something dubbed the Bleeding Effect. After a few days, the experiments were interrupted by the distant sounds of gunfire; a group of Assassins had attempted to stage a rescue, and failed. According to Vidic, all were killed. Vidic even told Desmond that the would-be rescuers were the last of the Assassins Desmond had grown up with, their desert facility having been destroyed. However once Vidic had left, Lucy revealed that Desmond's parents had likely escaped and that she was herself an Assassin, working undercover at Abstergo.

Desmond returned to the Animus, and eventually witnessed Altaïr receive a map detailing the locations of various other artifacts—exactly what Abstergo had been searching for. Vidic immediately reported his success to his superiors and sent out teams to retrieve the Pieces of Eden. Vidic was ordered to dispose of Desmond, but Lucy intervened and prevented his execution on the basis that he might prove to be useful in the future. Vidic spared Desmond, but his fate remained uncertain. As he returned to his room, Desmond suddenly found himself able to see strange symbols on the walls, apparently written in blood. These were the last messages of Subject 16. Desmond, having been affected through the Bleeding Effect by his time in the Animus gained one of Altaïr's special abilities: an extrasensory power known by the Assassins as Eagle Vision. It was this heightened awareness that allowed him to see Subject 16's bloodstains.

After inspecting the incoherent ramblings left by Subject 16, Desmond was interrupted by Lucy, her hands and clothes covered in blood. She placed Desmond back in the Animus and synchronized him with the closest genetic match she could find between him and Subject 16; this turned out to be a 15th century Florentine nobleman, Ezio Auditore. Desmond witnessed his birth before being pulled back into reality. Taking the machine's memory core with her, Lucy insisted they leave the facility immediately. They fled through the laboratory, incapacitating guards. Thanks to Desmond's Eagle Vision, they broke through a car's code-locked door, and escaped in the stolen vehicle.

Desmond was taken to an Assassin hideout inside a warehouse. There he met two other Assassins: Shaun Hastings, a historian, and Rebecca Crane, a technical expert responsible for maintaining the Animus 2.0,

the Assassins' version of the device. The Assassins planned to have Desmond relive the memories of his ancestor Ezio and exploit the Bleeding Effect to train him in the skills of an Assassin in a matter of days. Desmond, keen to get revenge on the Templars for what they had done to him, gladly agreed and reentered the Animus—this time a willing participant.

In just a few hours Desmond relived much of Ezio's life, witnessing the death of his father at the hands of the Templars and his subsequent quest for vengeance, followed by his induction into the Brotherhood and his fight against Templar Grand Master Rodrigo Borgia for control of the Apple of Eden. Desmond's skills rapidly improved, but his time in the Animus also began to affect him adversely, and he suffered hallucinations. At one point, he felt himself transported back to medieval Acre, discovering that Altaïr and Maria Thorpe had conceived a child. Despite this, he chose to return to the Animus and continue his training.

During this process, the Assassins discovered a series of anomalies in the code. These turned out to be messages left by Subject 16 on the original Animus' data core, which had been transferred to the Animus 2.0. As Desmond tracked down the anomalies and investigated them, he discovered a wealth of cryptic information about the history of the Templars and Assassins. After collecting all of them, he was shown a strange memory featuring two figures running through a futuristic complex—though the video was dated to a time long before the birth of Christ.

The Assassins were further shocked when they witnessed one of Ezio's memories, which saw him taking an Apple of Eden to a secret vault underneath the Sistine Chapel in Rome. There, Ezio was confronted by an image of a woman calling herself Minerva. She talked of an ancient war between the humans and an ancient race known only as Those Who Came Before—among whom Minerva counted herself—and a catastrophe which had followed. It was Minerva and her people who had created the Pieces of Eden, and apparently humanity as well. Minerva then addressed not Ezio but *Desmond himself* through his ancestor, warning him of another terrible disaster, which was soon to come unless he took action to prevent it.

The Assassins had little time to ponder these revelations, however. The Templars had not been idle, and descended upon the hideout in force, with Vidic participating in the attack. The Abstergo guards used batons to incapacitate Desmond so that he could be returned to the Animus, but Lucy had given him the traditional hidden blade of the Assassins. Using the skills derived from his time in the Animus, Desmond cut through the attackers with ease. Vidic retreated, and the Assassins loaded the Animus 2.0 into a van and escaped.

They made their way to Monteriggioni, the ancestral home of the Auditore family. Though still bearing the marks of the damage done by Cesare Borgia's attack in 1500, much of the town and its villa remained unchanged. In an attempt to avoid the Templar's mobile phone surveillance systems, the Assassins decided to set up their base in the underground sanctuary that lay beneath the villa, but found the access blocked. However, by following an image of Ezio seen with the aid of Desmond's Eagle Vision, they discovered a back entrance—the tunnel through which Ezio and the citizens of Monteriggioni had escaped 500 years past.

Lucy and Desmond headed through the tunnel, with the latter becoming increasingly affected by hallucinations of past events. After working together to overcome numerous obstacles, they made their way to the sanctuary chamber, where Desmond saw an image of an aged Ezio, who had seemingly returned to the villa late in his life. He also discovered an enigmatic series of numbers—1419, 1420, 1421—apparently left by Ezio, for they could only be seen using Eagle Vision. Lucy and Desmond unblocked the door leading into the sanctuary, allowing Shaun and Rebecca entry, and began to set up a new base. Soon, Desmond was back in the Animus.

This time around the Assassins sought to discover the location of the Apple of Eden that had been in Ezio's possession, but again it was impossible to directly access the targeted memories. Desmond began immediately where he had left off, after Ezio's encounter with Minerva, and worked his way through

the Italian Assassin's life as he lost the Apple to Cesare Borgia and his attempt to reclaim it by liberating Rome from the Templars. Again Desmond encountered more codes left by Subject 16 which, when put together and run as an executable within the Animus program, transported Desmond to a strange place, where he encountered a ghostly image of Subject 16—who seemingly maintained some form of existence within the Animus. Cryptic as ever, Subject 16 alluded to the necessity of finding a woman called Eve before disappearing, causing the strange landscape to dissolve and Desmond to reawaken.

Eventually, Desmond saw Ezio place the Apple in a secret temple accessed through the Colosseum in Rome. The four Assassins immediately packed up and headed to the city. Desmond went ahead, journeying through the ruins. As he did, he heard a mysterious voice: that of Juno, one of Those Who Came Before. She expanded upon Minerva's warnings given in the vault under the Sistine Chapel.

Soon afterwards, Desmond found a long tunnel that brought him to the Santa Maria Aracoeli Basilica—which according to myth had been built upon a temple to Juno. He unbarred the doors, letting the others inside, and then manipulated a series of switches to reveal a technologically advanced elevator. The Assassins descended together into the depths beneath the church, where they discovered an expansive vault. Navigating the corridors, they encountered a grand door, which Desmond was able to open with the password "72", though he did not know how he worked it out. Finally, the Assassins

reached the central chamber, where the Apple was held. As Desmond reached out to take it, he felt himself seized by a powerful force. He could only look on in horror as Juno compelled him to stab Lucy in the stomach.

The shock of killing his friend Lucy, combined with the damage done to his mind by the Animus, caused Desmond to collapse into a coma. Two Assassins, one of which was known only as William M, recovered him. At a secret location, William M. had Desmond placed in the Animus, believing it to be the only thing that would keep him alive. Desmond then experienced one additional memory of Ezio, which revealed him visiting another vault that contained a series of unexplained coordinates.

Shortly afterwards Desmond was lost completely, his consciousness entering a region of the Animus software known as the Black Room, where he hoped to ultimately reconstruct his own shattered memories with the help of Subject 16. As he lay unconscious in the Animus, William revealed that Desmond was rare, for his genes contained high concentrations of First Civilization DNA—something, which no one had been aware of until Abstergo realized his potential. This particularity is what made Desmond able to handle Pieces of Eden, like some of his ancestors.

As William coordinated Desmond's transport to New York, Desmond, locked within the confines of the Animus, was confronted with the realities of his upbringing as a child of the Brotherhood. Reminiscing about his childhood experiences—being born as an Assassin without ever having experienced the reality of the life and ideology which came with it—and contemplating them in the light of the recent events of his life served as a starting point in Desmond's mending process. With experience and knowledge which had hitherto been withheld for his own safety, Desmond finally understood who and what he was. With a final sacrifice on the part of Subject 16, Desmond ultimately stood ready to reclaim his mind.

After regaining his senses, Desmond resumed working with the Assassins, who expected great things from him. However, his relationship with his father was still strained. They were still very angry with each other, but over the course of their mission, they slowly began to reconcile their differences. William pushed Desmond in order to make him realize what was at stake, and realize the importance of his role.

Thanks to his connection to the First Civilization, Desmond began to receive messages from the powerful precursor race. Juno was giving him clues to humanity's survival, though her specific intentions were still largely unknown. Through contacts with Juno and exploration of their Temple, Desmond caught glimpses of the events that destroyed the First Civilization.

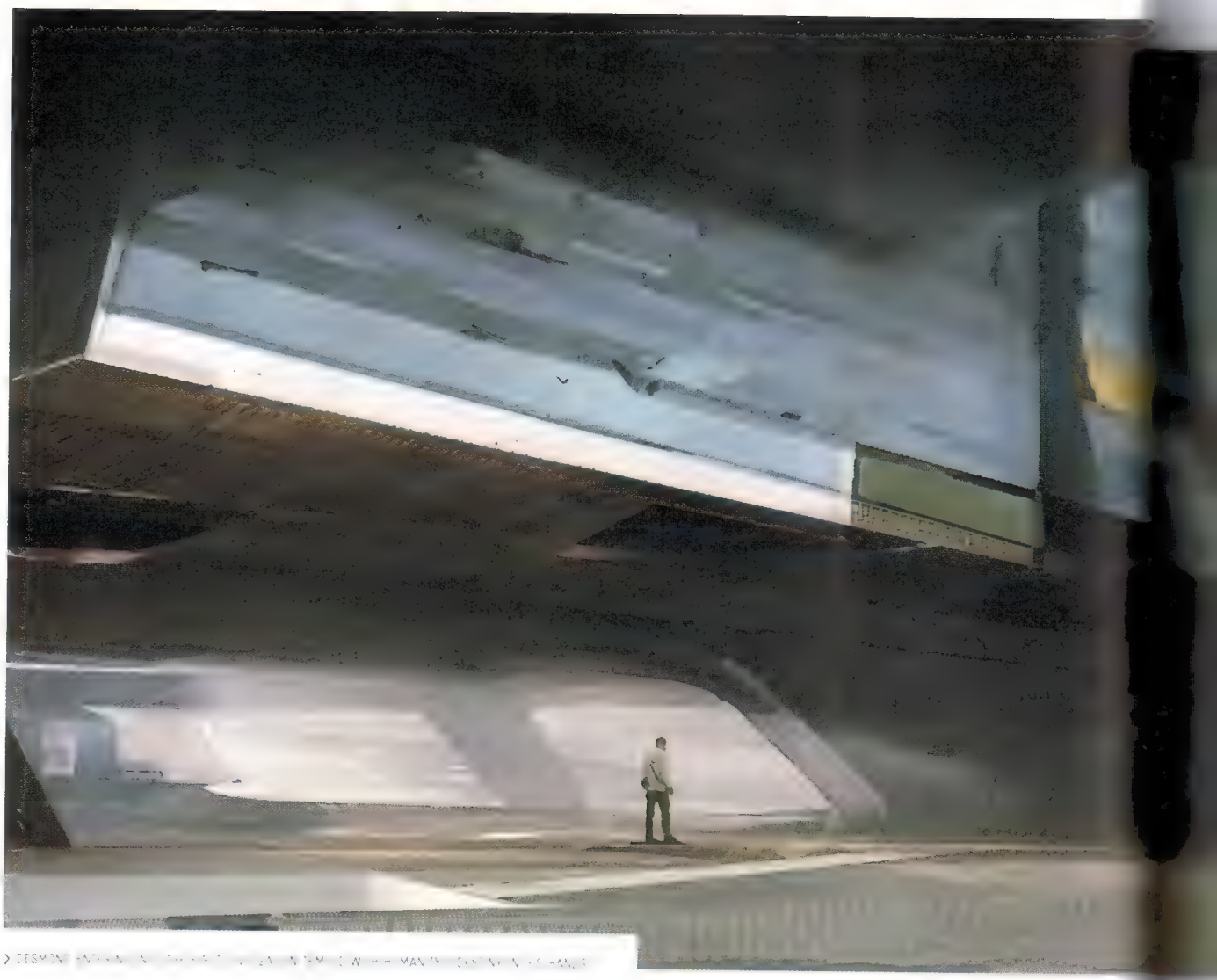
Desmond re-entered the Animus, upgraded by his Assassin colleagues Shaun and Rebecca, and found himself in mid-eighteenth century London, England, where he experienced the genetic memory of his ancestor Haytham Kenway. Kenway retrieved a powerful amulet, which was a key believed to open the First Civilization Temple central doors, where Desmond was now inside. Juno, a member of Those Who Came Before, urged Desmond to retrieve Haytham's amulet.

Desmond returned to the Animus and was shocked to discover that Haytham was actually a member of the Templar Order. Despite that shocking information, Desmond continued to relive the memories and discovered that the amulet was located somewhere in the United States, thought its purpose and function remained unknown.

Meanwhile, Desmond's colleague Shaun Hastings identified three power sources. Desmond needed these power sources, in addition to the key, in order to gain further access to the Temple. These batteries were scattered across the planet and Desmond, Shaun, Rebecca Crane, and his father set out to find them. Desmond retrieved the first device from the penthouse of a Manhattan skyscraper, but to get it he had to go through Daniel Cross, a double agent working for the Templars.

The next battery was in a VIP booth in a sports arena in Brazil, surrounded by Abstergo security. Desmond again encountered Daniel Cross, who grabbed the device and ran away. Desmond located Cross with his eagle vision, before pick pocketing the device and escaping via the subway.

Desmond went back into the Animus to re-live the memories of his ancestors. This time he experienced



› DESMOND

the life of the Assassin Connor, son of Haytham Kenway. Connor joined the Brotherhood and helped on occasion the American patriots in their struggle against Great Britain. Through Connor, Desmond experienced the fierce rivalry between the Assassins and the Templars that raged alongside the American Revolution, and Connor's attempts to annihilate the Templar presence during the War for Independence.

Desmond's colleagues located the final battery in Cairo, Egypt. However, as time was precious, they decided that Desmond should continue his work in the Animus to find the location of the amulet. William Miles volunteered to retrieve the power source so that they could proceed further into the First Civilization's Temple. However, William was captured by the Templars and taken to Abstergo's facilities in Italy. Desmond, Rebecca, and Shaun headed to Italy to save William and retake the power source. Desmond made sure to bring the Apple of Eden with him.

Desmond was welcomed into the Abstergo lobby by an impressive number of security guards. He fought his way up to the fourth floor, but instead of finding his father, he encountered Daniel Cross. As they fought, Cross began to succumb to the Bleeding Effects brought about by his exposure to the Animus. While Cross was trying to escape, Desmond killed him with his hidden blade.

After making his way to Dr. Warren Vidic's fifth floor office, Desmond used the Apple of Eden to force the security guards to kill Vidic before killing themselves. He liberated his father, collected the power source, and then escaped Abstergo with his colleagues.

With all three batteries, Desmond returned to the Animus and to Connor's life during the Revolution, to find the amulet Juno requested. Connor killed his father and the other Templar leaders, annihilating the Order's presence in North America. In the end, Connor was able to take possession of the amulet, before burying it at Juno's request.

Desmond dug out the key out of the ground and rushed to the Temple, where they used the three batteries to power it up, revealing different interpretations of Those Who Came Before.

The fate of the entire human race was in Desmond's hands, and Juno and Minerva wanted him to choose an outcome: Minerva wanted him to sacrifice the world to prevent future atrocities and start anew, while Juno wanted him to save the world and preserve humankind, even though this might restore the First Civilization and rekindle the ancient war.

In the end, Desmond freed Juno, despite the danger, and the Temple became completely operational, no longer running on emergency power. Desmond, had saved humanity and the world, but he had also helped restore the First Civilization. In the process, Desmond perished and left the human race on precarious ground, at the mercy of First Civilization Juno.

FRIENDS & ALLIES

3 : A : 1
#A

WILLIAM MILES

William Miles (born 1948) is the driven, intelligent, but emotionally distant father of Desmond Miles. Born within the Assassin community, he has devoted his entire life to the ideals of the Brotherhood. He raised his son from birth in a remote Assassin community called The Farm, located in the Black Hills of South Dakota, outside Rapid City. William is a technically minded man, fully devoted to the Assassins and their cause, whose passion for politics outweighs his responsibility to his family. While William's wife has always been able to deal with this emotional distance, young Desmond could not. Eventually he grew to feel that his father was more of a drill sergeant than a parent and fled the compound, despite his parents' repeated warnings to never leave.

It is unknown what actions—if any—William took to find his son. However, his supervisory position over the various Assassin cells spread over the world seems to have ensured that he would be among the first to know should Desmond resurface. Whether William took that position for that specific purpose or simply to serve the Brotherhood to the best of his abilities is unknown. Once Desmond was taken by the Templars and thus brought into Lucy Stillman's sphere of awareness, it is entirely conceivable that Shaun Hastings' first report to him contained this information, leading to William once again being a part of Desmond's life—even if only from afar. This changed when Desmond was taken over by Juno in the vault under the Santa Maria Aracoeli.

Desmond's subsequent mental breakdown and comatose state led to William intervening directly and having him reintegrated into the Animus, in the hope that his son might be able to repair his fragmented mind. Despite the inherent dangers involved—the Animus was not meant to be used to simulate cognitive processes—William held to the belief that his son was willful and strong-minded enough to use the tools at hand to rebuild his mind. He also expressed subdued regret at Lucy's passing, describing her as a remarkable woman. While Desmond lay in the Animus, William gathered the team and had them all travel to New York, to assume new identities as well as continue the search for what may or may not be a new Piece of Eden.

William Miles is also the Assassin who provided Paul Bellamy with records pertaining to Nikolai Orelov in 1998, when Daniel Cross joined Bellamy's compound; another indication of his importance in the Brotherhood as well as his ability to acquire and disseminate information across the entire Assassin network.

William understood that something larger the struggle between the Assassins and the Templars was at stake. He became aware that his son Desmond was the key to protecting the human race against Those Who Came Before.

Despite the emotional distance between them, father and son had no choice but to cooperate in order to prevent the end of the world. Desmond shared the information he had received from Juno, a member of the First Civilization, though the motives of the precursor race remained unknown.

William tried to make Desmond understand the importance of his role in the fate of humankind. He pressured his son, resulting in many confrontations between them, making their reconciliation more difficult. But with the help from Shaun Hastings and Rebecca Crane, William and his son found a way to work together, and eventually Desmond commitment grew, as he began to understand his particular role in the events in front of him.

Gathering intelligence and controlling information were crucial for the Brotherhood as they searched for power sources to gain further access to a First Civilization Temple. William was instrumental in trying to find the necessary artifacts and information to lead the Assassins towards Temple's special rooms.

After pointing Desmond in the direction of the first two power sources, William volunteered to find the third and final one in Cairo, Egypt. However, he was ambushed by Abstergo Industries and brought to their compound in Italy. Dr. Warren Vidic hoped to exchange William for the Apple of Eden in Desmond's possession. Instead, Desmond stormed the compound to free his father, killing Vidic and his *protégé* Daniel Cross in the process. With all three power sources in their possession, William and his son activated the hidden features of the First Civilization's Temple. Desmond sacrificed his life but ultimately stopped the end of the world.

3 : A : 1
#B

LUCY STILLMAN

Lucy Stillman (1988 - 2012) was a modern-day Assassin. She is notable for having spent considerable time working undercover as an employee at Abstergo Industries, the corporate front of the Knights Templar, where she helped conduct research on the Animus Project.

Lucy attended university but eventually left because her professors considered her research to be pseudoscience and refused to give credence to her work. However, her area of study was in fact purposefully chosen to draw the attention of Dr. Warren Vidic, in order to facilitate an undercover operation within Abstergo Industries. This ploy succeeded—Vidic offered her a position at Abstergo Industries soon afterwards, promising her the opportunity to pursue her chosen field of research with unlimited budget and support. Lucy accepted the offer and began to work with Vidic on the Animus Project, which was focused on the exploration of genetic memories via a device known as the Animus. She thus oversaw the design and deployment of several versions of both the machine and its operating system. Once Abstergo believed Lucy to have outlived her usefulness, they sent in a team to neutralize her—however, Vidic intervened and saved her life, though his motivations remain unknown.

After this event, Lucy remained an assistant of Vidic and continued to supervise the programming, functionality, diagnostics and maintenance of the Animus. At the same time she used her position at Abstergo to continue her work on behalf of the Assassins, digging up information on the activities of the Templars, particularly in regard to their search for the Pieces of Eden.

Lucy seemed to have been preoccupied by the suicide of Subject 16, one of the project's test subjects. She believed that the main cause of Subject 16's death and the madness that preceded it was a psychological phenomenon she referred to as the Bleeding Effect. This process was described in her correspondence to Vidic as a "blending of real-time and genetic memory" resulting from prolonged exposure to the Animus. This prompted her to emphasize to Vidic the importance of using the Animus in moderation to preserve the mental integrity and stability of test subjects. While she justified this protocol by pointing out the practicality of keeping test subjects alive, she may have been more deeply motivated by her own concerns about Subject 16's death and a desire to ensure this fate did not befall the newest inductee of the Animus Project, Desmond Miles—dubbed Subject 17.

Upon his capture and arrival at the facility, Abstergo swiftly began to explore the memories of Desmond's Assassin ancestor, Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad, in the hopes of locating surviving Pieces of Eden. During this time Lucy managed to persuade Vidic to give Desmond longer breaks from the Animus than previous subjects, citing the disaster that had transpired with Subject 16. This served not only to protect Desmond from the deleterious effects of prolonged exposure to the Animus, but it also delayed the progress of the project itself. Sensing that Abstergo was on the verge of discovering vital clues on the Pieces of Eden within Desmond's genetic memory, Lucy went so far as to sabotage the Animus in order to buy more time.

Keeping her identity as an Assassin concealed from Desmond, Lucy nonetheless managed to help him learn more about Abstergo by dropping subtle hints in conversation, giving him security codes to move in between different rooms of the research wing and helping him acquire access to various computers located in the laboratory. In order to prevent Desmond's activities from being discovered, Lucy hacked the Abstergo security system and put them on a loop using old footage. At the same time, she continued communicating with the Assassins, eventually requesting help in freeing Desmond from the facility.

The subsequent assault on Abstergo failed completely, resulting in the deaths of all Assassins involved. It was this which led Lucy to reveal herself to Desmond as an Assassin. When Desmond's target memory—the birth of Ezio Auditore—was finally unlocked, Lucy led their escape from Abstergo. She also stole the Animus' memory core in order to ensure that Desmond would later be able to access the memories of his Italian ancestor, Ezio Auditore.

With Desmond unceremoniously stuffed into the trunk of her car, Lucy drove to a safe house in Italy, manned by Shaun Hastings and Rebecca Crane. There it was explained to Desmond that his help was needed in winning the war against the Templars. Lucy invited him to join her team and undergo proper Assassin training. He agreed and, under supervision, was placed in an Assassin-built Animus. While exploring his ancestor's memories, Desmond also used the Bleeding Effect to learn some of Ezio's skills.

It did not take long for Templar agents to storm the Assassin hideout. The team fled to the ruins of the Villa Auditore in Monteriggioni, where Desmond continued to explore Ezio's memory through the Animus, while Lucy maintained communication with William M., a higher level Assassin. She also used her old passwords to hack into the Abstergo computer network to keep tabs on any further Templar activity. The team was eventually able to pinpoint the location of an Apple of Eden in an underground vault, accessed through the Colosseum in Rome. Upon traveling there they found the entrance of the vault, and eventually laid claim upon the Apple which had belonged to Ezio Auditore centuries earlier. However, Desmond's attempt to interface with the artifact left him under the command of Juno, one of Those Who Came Before. Under Juno's influence, Desmond stabbed Lucy in the abdomen, killing her.

Lucy was buried shortly thereafter in a small cemetery on the outskirts of Rome. Though Shaun Hastings attended her funeral, he was the only one of her team present—the others were already on their way to another location in an attempt to help Desmond, whose mind had fragmented as a result of his interaction with Juno.

3 : A : 1
#C

REBECCA CRANE

Unlike most Assassins, Rebecca Crane was not born into the Brotherhood. Instead, she was actively recruited for her technical skills, which were supplemented by rigorous combat training upon her induction into the ranks of the Assassins. Within her team, Rebecca holds a support role alongside Shaun Hastings. Despite the dire circumstances ,that she and her team found themselves in, Rebecca remained a very optimistic and outgoing person. Friendly with her teammates and quick to joke, she sometimes seemed immature despite how seriously she took their mission and her work.

Before joining the Order, Rebecca was very athletic, with an affinity for extreme snowboarding. She eventually broke her leg, and in her inactivity developed an interest in computers and coding. This self-taught expertise was what led to her eventual recruitment into the Brotherhood. With her programming skills and some schematics smuggled out of Abstergo by teammate Lucy Stillman, Rebecca was able to design and construct the Animus 2.0. In addition to providing technical support to the Assassins, she was responsible for the maintenance of the device's hardware, and was often seen around the safe house fiddling with the Animus or working on the computers hooked up to the machine.

Rebecca has used the Animus herself, but claimed to have found the experience boring, having no interest in reliving the memories of a Prussian mercenary ancestor. Unlike her teammate Shaun, who was rather skeptical in his views on the Assassins' purpose and methods, Rebecca fully believed in what the Brotherhood was trying to achieve. While she would readily admit that the methods of the Assassins were not ideal, she held true to the principle that sometimes people have to die for things to change.

Rebecca was directly involved in Shaun's recruitment into the Brotherhood. Shaun had been tracking Abstergo, and therefore the Templars, since he was a teenager, and attempted to spread the word about their activities. When Abstergo sent a security detail to apprehend him, Rebecca intervened, saving his life. The Assassins recognized his talents and recruited him into the Order. Since then, Rebecca and Shaun have worked very closely together.

Following Desmond Miles' escape from Abstergo Industries, Rebecca spent a lot of her time working with him as he relived Ezio Auditore's memories through the Animus. When the team encountered corrupted files or memories within the device—like the ones left behind by Subject 16—Rebecca worked to piece them together, thus helping Desmond. Though he was a new addition to the team, Rebecca was supportive of Desmond. She often stood up for him and showed concern over his well-being after spending time in the Animus.

Rebecca remained with Desmond after Lucy's death, missing her friend's funeral in order to ensure that Desmond's mind would not fracture further while he was placed in the Animus. She traveled with William Miles without protest—her emotional stability during this time a clear display of her ability to integrate into the Assassin lifestyle.

Rebecca continued to be an important member of the Assassin Brotherhood, updating the Animus software so that when Desmond re-entered the machine to experience the genetic memories of Connor, it was easier to navigate.

Her participation was vital in supporting Desmond's missions. She created a small camera drone that followed Desmond during his missions to find power sources. Moreover, she helped Desmond enter the Manhattan skyscraper without tripping any Templar security systems so that they could acquire the first power source.

Rebecca and Shaun then found another battery in Brazil, establishing that a spectator in a Brazilian stadium was wearing the artifact as a bracelet. Rebecca's work was important in locating the device quickly and moving on to other missions.

Rebecca directly contributed to the success of many Assassin missions. Not only by supporting Desmond by creating distractions to help him infiltrate high-risk locations, but also by gathering intelligence that led Desmond to his encounters with Juno and Minerva, members of the First Civilization.

3 : A : 1
#D

SHAUN HASTINGS

Shaun Hastings is a member of the modern day Assassin Brotherhood. Working as an analyst and researcher, he is responsible for compiling and maintaining the knowledge archives of the Animus 2.0. Additionally, he provides tactical support and intelligence to Assassin cells around the world. While the nature of Shaun's work is mostly cerebral and he spends much of his time behind a desk rather than in the field, his contribution is instrumental in the ongoing race between Assassins and Templars to secure the remaining Pieces of Eden.

As a teenager, Shaun displayed a strong interest in unexplained phenomenon and historical mysteries. He was curious, often to the point of recklessness, and his fascination with conspiracy theories made him eventually cross path with Abstergo Industries. Shaun's investigation led him to believe the company was conducting dubious activities and concealing the truth from the public. Using the pseudonym "Guy Fawkes"— after the English rebel responsible for the 1605 Gunpowder Plot—he broadcasted his suspicions across the internet, on message boards and newsgroups in a campaign to uncover facts and increase public awareness. He thus revealed a great deal of information Abstergo would have preferred kept secret, including the names and leaders of various classified projects, secret corporate divisions and, perhaps most importantly, evidence that implicated the company in several dangerous experiments. This, of course, drew the attention of both the Assassin Brotherhood and the Templar Order.

Templar reprisal was swift. On December 10, 2010, Abstergo agents, acting under the orders of CEO Alan Rikkin, apprehended Shaun. The Assassins, however, had kept Shaun in their sights, and Rebecca Crane—a member of the Brotherhood—rescued him.

Shaun was brought into the Brotherhood following his escape. While grateful to Rebecca for her timely intervention, he justified his allegiance to the Brotherhood with pragmatism, believing that being an Assassin saved him from a life of hiding from the Templars.

Shaun's feeling toward Assassin methodology is ambivalent, however. Between the Brotherhood and the Templar Order, he believes the Assassins to be the lesser of two evils. He does not wholly support their ease with taking lives, nor does he totally accept their justifications for the necessity of murder. Despite his unconventional philosophy, Shaun remains a valued member of the Brotherhood. With his natural talent for analyzing information, his breadth of historical knowledge and experience conducting research, he provides the organization with a great deal of intelligence and tactical support for Assassins in the field. He is also trusted with the knowledge of Assassin cells around the globe, being the tactical lifeline of at least one Assassin cell in Sao Paolo.

Shaun is part of a small group of Assassins operating in Italy. He and his colleagues—Rebecca Crane and Lucy Stillman—assisted in the training of Desmond Miles through the Animus 2.0, allowing him to unlock the abilities of his ancestor, Ezio Auditore. Shaun functioned as historian and researcher, compiling useful database entries to support Desmond's synchronization with the memories of his ancestor. Shaun's natural talent for cryptanalysis also proved useful in investigating encoded messages scattered within the Animus software by Subject 16, Desmond's predecessor.

Shaun continued to provide his historical expertise toward Desmond's efforts in the Animus during the move to the abandoned Assassin Sanctuary in the ruins of Villa Auditore, in Monteriggioni, maintaining relative calm despite the stressful situation. During this time, he was also responsible for relaying information between other Assassin cells, monitoring their progress and providing tactical support. He corresponded via e-mail with an Assassin named

William M, aiding him in observing Assassins around the world, particularly those operating in Sao Paolo, Moscow and Tokyo. Shaun also functioned as an information filter; he was often the first to know of the whereabouts and status of other Assassin teams, and would be trusted to conceal this information from his own colleagues, as necessary.

Shaun's maintenance of the Animus's historical archives also helped Desmond navigate his ancestor's memories to discover the presence of a vault beneath the Santa Maria Aracoeli, which could be accessed from the Colosseum in Rome. However, it was his gift for abstract thinking and his wealth of historical knowledge that allowed him to decipher the password guarding the vault; Shaun and his colleagues were therefore the first to lay eyes on the Apple of Eden hidden within this vault in over five centuries.

The death of Lucy Stillman at Desmond's hand was understandably traumatic for Shaun, and William Miles' return and rescue of his son was at first met with outright hostility on his part. With Lucy dead, Shaun and Rebecca nevertheless turned to William as an interim leader for their cell. However, his sole focus on Desmond and his refusal to acknowledge that he might have been a plant angered the young archivist, who still mourned his friend's death. Shaun remained behind to organize Lucy's burial before joining the others on their flight to New York, where new identities provided by William allowed them and their charge safe passage into the city.

Shaun's investigations into the First Civilization proved invaluable to the Assassin Brotherhood as he discovered that three batteries were needed in order to gain further entry into the Temple and save the world. Subsequently, he hacked into the Abstergo network to locate them.

Shaun guided Desmond to the first power source, located in the penthouse of a Manhattan skyscraper. Despite the danger involved in breaking and entering, Shaun insisted that there was no other way to obtain it, given the time constraints. Following Desmond's first successful retrieval, Shaun located another power source in Brazil.

Shortly after detecting the third and final power source, Shaun learned that the Templars had captured Desmond's father, William Miles, and taken him to Abstergo's facilities in Italy, the same compound where Desmond was kept previously. Shaun joined the mission to rescue Miles and recover the artifact.

While searching for the power sources, Desmond Miles was reliving genetic memories from his ancestors to locate a Piece of Eden. During the American Revolutionary War, Desmond's ancestor Haytham Kenway and his son Connor were in possession of an extremely powerful amulet. Shaun was shocked when he discovered that Haytham Kenway was a Templar.

Shaun also learned from Subject 16 that George Washington, leader of the American Revolutionary movement, might have been in contact with an Apple of Eden after the War for Independence. His research was crucial in recovering Pieces of Eden from that era.

Shaun took notice of the various natural signals that suggested the decay of planet Earth and was aware of the dangers involved in trying to prevent the end of the world. Moreover, the Templars actively obstructed his efforts at every turn.

Ultimately, Shaun provided Desmond with the tools and knowledge to enter the Temple of the First Civilization and decide the fate of the world.

3 : A : 1
#E

ERUDITO

It is unclear whether Erudito is a person or a group, but evidence thus far suggests that it is a collective composed of a number of individuals working independently, but who share a common purpose: to stand in direct opposition to Abstergo Industries. Whether this Erudito Collective is in collusion with the Assassin Brotherhood or not remains unclear. However, knowingly or not, the actions of the Collective undoubtedly serve the cause of the Assassins at this time.

Despite Abstergo Industries maintaining state of the art computer security, the Collective has managed to hack into their systems on several occasions. Its latest target to date has been the Project Legacy initiative. Several consistent and sustained intrusions in the system resulted in many potential subjects being contacted directly, and warned about the true motivations behind the Project. The impact of these warnings on the participants has yet to be fully assessed, but Project leaders have insisted there has yet to be a serious breach in security. Nevertheless, Abstergo executives have suspended Project Legacy, at least for the time being.

The true scope of the Collective's infiltration remains to be determined. While it is not yet known exactly how deeply Erudito is embedded within the Abstergo computer mainframes, it is becoming obvious for all concerned that the Collective presents a real threat.

Abstergo Industries security currently has a find and capture order out on Erudito. This is also accompanied by a retrieval of technologies request so that the hackers' means of access into the company's network may be studied and appropriate countermeasures applied.

A : 1

SUBJECT 16

Formerly Clay Kaczmarek, Sixteen (1982 - 2012) is no longer human, but rather an AI recreation of Subject 16's personality within the Animus. As such he is able to manipulate much of the Animus' programming from within to aid Desmond Miles in his fight against the Templars.

Prior to Desmond's abduction by the Abstergo Corporation, the Templars made several attempts to unpack the memories of another Assassin known only as Subject 16, who specialized in computer hacking and engineering. Under the direction of Warren Vidic, the Templars spent many months diving deep into the genetic memory of Subject 16 with the hope of unveiling the location of one of the Apples of Eden. Tragically, the strain of remaining in the Animus for hours at a time began to disintegrate his psyche, merging it with those of his ancestors.

Subject 16 gathered a new sense of purpose after Vidic discovered that he was a direct descendant of Adam, the biblical figure. Adam's exposure to the knowledge contained within the Apple of Eden was passed onto Subject 16 as their personalities merged. Thus Subject 16 discovered the ancient secrets of the Assassins and Those Who Came Before. He had to act before his mind disappeared entirely. Using his computer engineering skills, he hacked into the Animus, depositing research stolen from Abstergo and his own revelations into the memory core; for his successor to discover. He also synched himself with the Animus, uploading a copy of his personality into the network, but rendered it inactive so that only his successor could find and revive it.

Exhausted, paranoid, and suffering from the accumulation of so many overlapping identities, Subject 16 went mad and ultimately committed suicide, leaving behind clues written in his own blood.

While these had been washed away, they would be viewed through Eagle Vision by Desmond Miles, the next Assassin to occupy his secure cell.

Revived by his successor, Desmond Miles, Subject 16 has kept careful watch on Desmond's mental state while looking for opportunities to influence his progress. Now, with Desmond trapped alongside him in the Animus 2.0, Subject 16 takes it upon himself to help his friend escape the infinite loop that has trapped him for what seems like an eternity. Whether Desmond will be able to return to his body, or Sixteen survive the experience, remains as of yet unknown.

ENEMIES

3 : A : 2
#A

DR. WARREN VIDIC

Dr. Warren Vidic is the head of genetic research at Abstergo Industries, where he leads the Animus Project. One of the world's leading authorities on genetic memory, Vidic has dedicated most of his life to the subject. It is in great part because of his theories that the Animus device was created, with Vidic leading the initiative from the onset.

Vidic's work culminated in 2012 with the capture of Subject 17, Desmond Miles, whose genetic memory he believed to be the final key in locating existing Pieces of Eden. The approaching deadline for Subject 17's targeted memories, reinforced by Abstergo CEO Alan Rikkin, heightened Vidic's anxiousness to complete the research. Thus he kept Subject 17 in the Animus for prolonged sessions, despite the disastrous results the same approach had had on his immediate predecessor, Subject 16. Vidic's cold perseverance could have had serious effects on Desmond's physical and psychological health, but Lucy Stillman, Vidic's assistant, protested on his behalf. Although frustrated, Vidic followed her advice.

Vidic's patience was soon rewarded when Subject 17's target memory was unlocked even though Lucy undercut his authority almost immediately, this time to prevent Desmond's execution. She broke out of Abstergo's facilities with Desmond in tow, revealing her allegiance to the Assassins. Vidic accompanied the guards sent to pursue them, confronting the Assassins at their hideout and offering Desmond the chance to return to Abstergo. But Lucy and Desmond overpowered Vidic's men, forcing him to flee.

Shortly after his return to Abstergo, Vidic began the next stage of the project: training new Templar recruits into soldiers using the harvested memories of Animus test subjects.

Acting on information secured at the Moscow's Bolshoi Theater by his *protégé* Daniel Cross, Vidic tracked the movements of Desmond Miles very closely. Vidic spent several years searching for Desmond before finally finding him and ordering his abduction. He was intrigued by the former Subject 17's quest to secure a type of power source, spread out in pieces across the world. Vidic sent Daniel to not only intercept Desmond but also retrieve the Apple of Eden in his possession. Vidic also kidnapped Desmond's father William Miles as bait for an exchange. Vidic's desperately needed the Apple of Eden. The Apple was a necessary part to launch the Eye-Abstergo satellite, scheduled to leave the ground on December 21, 2012.

Desmond arrived at Abstergo's Italy location and fought his way through security guards to Vidic's fifth floor office. Though armed guards were surrounding him, Vidic could not protect himself against the Apple's power. Desmond used the Apple of Eden to force the guards to turn their guns on Vidic before taking their own lives. Warren Vidic's death has left a void in the leadership of Abstergo Industries that will take the Templars some time to fill.

3 : A : 2
#B

ALAN RIKKIN

Alan Rikkin is a CEO at Abstergo Industries and a member of the Knights Templar. Most of his work focuses on monitoring and responding to media coverage surrounding Abstergo's activities. Rikkin is responsible for maintaining Abstergo's public image and the security of its classified intelligence. When a letter detailing confidential company information was sent to Wikileaks in 2010 by conspiracy theorist Shaun Hastings, Rikkin ordered his apprehension. His efforts were undermined by the intervention of the Assassins, who ensured Hastings' escape. In that same year, Rikkin was tasked to coordinate with media and entertainment agencies aligned with Abstergo to bolster popular morale regarding the economic recession. This served to stabilize the status quo upon which modern Templar power depended.

In 2012, Rikkin's energies have been devoted to covering up several scandals, including the alleged suicide of Abstergo employee Leila Marino, the fallout of illegal experiments with a compound called New Fluoride, and the catastrophic incident with a Piece of Eden at Denver International Airport. Furthermore, Rikkin is responsible for overseeing Dr. Vidic's progress with the Animus Project, and is among the Templars leading the search for surviving Pieces of Eden.

3 : A : 2

ANSON PEAKE

Born in Manchester, England, Anson Peake earned degrees in business management and psychology before being recruited by Abstergo Industries. As the manager of Project Legacy, Peake was responsible for the smooth running of day-to-day operations, which meant monitoring recruits, helping them resolve any problem they encountered, as well as compiling daily reports of their findings. Peake took his job very seriously, but apparently was not aware of neither the true objectives of the project nor the fact that his employer was the corporate front of the Templar Order.

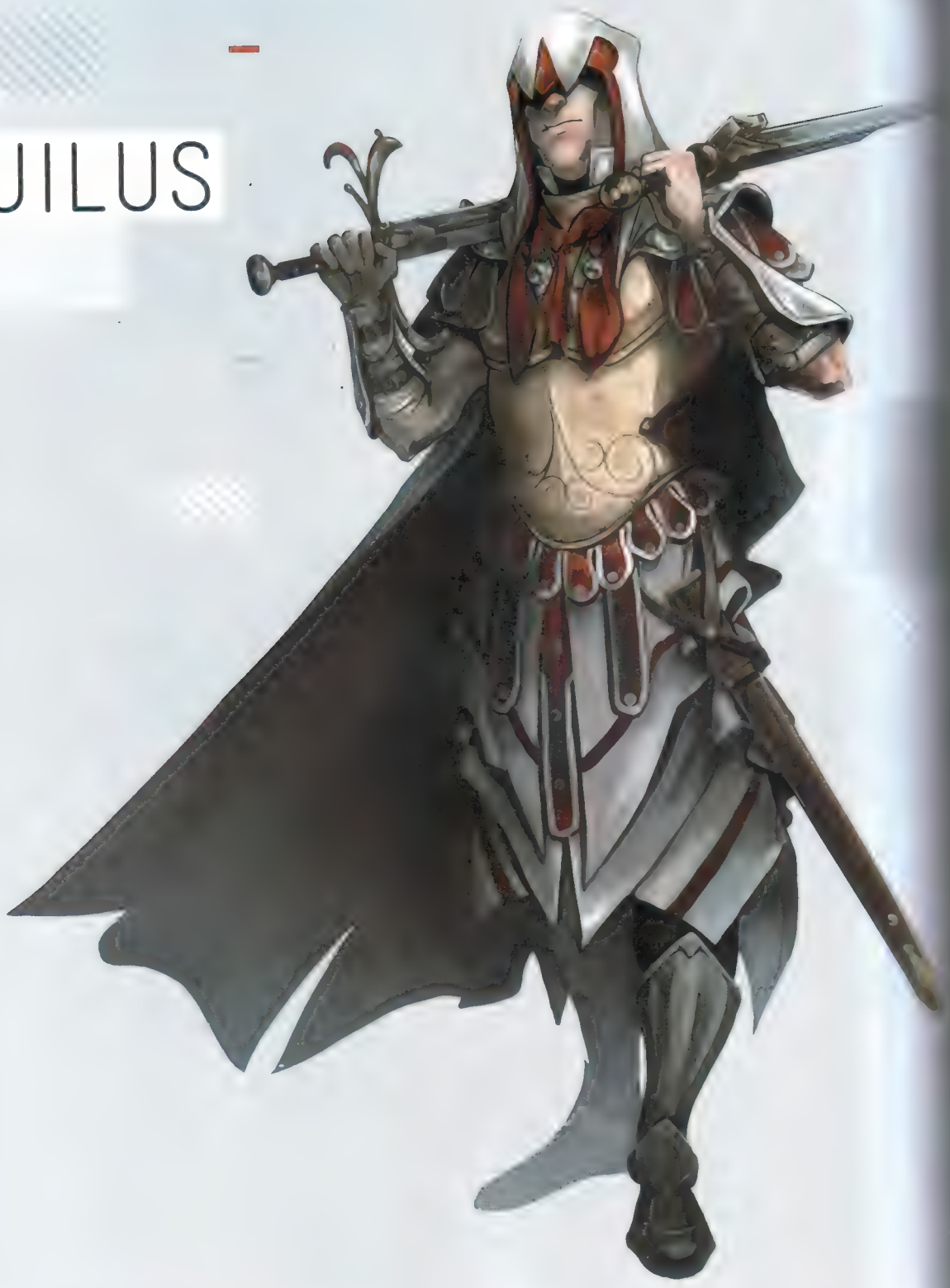
Friendly and outgoing, but somewhat pompous, Peake reportedly loved to spend time with his cats and watch football—being, not surprisingly, a huge Manchester United fan. He also enjoyed playing Solitaire after a long day's work; an activity he considered therapeutic.

Peake was aware that Project Legacy had been compromised by Erudito. Though he attempted to follow procedure and ensure the Project remained secure, standard Abstergo security measures proved to be insufficient. The security breaches resulted in Abstergo deciding to put the Project on hold. Soon afterwards, the company announced that Peake had gone missing and asked Project Legacy's recruits to notify the corporation should he contact any of them.

His whereabouts are currently unknown.

3 B

AQUILUS



Aquilus, a distant ancestor of Desmond Miles, was a Gallo-Roman member of the Assassin Brotherhood from Lugdunum (modern-day Lyon, France) during the 3rd century CE.

In the mid-3rd century, Frank and Alamanni warriors began to penetrate the Roman frontiers, moving deeply into Gaul. Roman Legions were frequently sent to defend the Empire's territory, at times losing and at times regaining control of the region. It was during this tumultuous period that Aquilus was sent on a mission to a Roman fortified camp to meet his cousin, Accipiter—also an Assassin. However, General Gracchus had been warned of Aquilus' arrival, and his Legionnaires ambushed and captured him. Gracchus wasted no time and stabbed Aquilus, leaving him to die.

Soon afterwards, Accipiter and Alamanni troops attacked the Romans, defeating Gracchus' legion. In the aftermath of the battle they found Aquilus, and eventually nursed him back to health. Bent on conquering Gaul, Accipiter swore to his cousin that the Alamanni would spare Lugdunum. True to his word, when they stormed into the Rhone Valley in 259, the Alamanni did not attack the city.

However, the Alamanni were still far from Aquilus' hometown. As soon as he was able to travel, Accipiter gave Aquilus an object concealed in a sack—an Ankh, which the Assassins suspected was a Piece of Eden. When he returned home, Aquilus gave the Ankh to his father, Lucius, for safekeeping. Believing that they had been betrayed, Lucius revealed his suspicions about Faustin, the Bishop of Lugdunum. Later that night, Aquilus broke into Faustin's villa to interrogate him. The Bishop confessed, divulging that his contact in Rome was Senator Caïus Fulvus Vultur, an old friend of Aquilus' father.

Aquilus headed home to discover his father murdered and the Ankh missing.

3 C

ALTAÏR IBN-LA'AHAD

1165 - 1257

Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad (1165 - 1257) was a Syrian Assassin during the Third Crusade, becoming leader Master of the Brotherhood in 1191. Altaïr's historical significance stems not only from the pivotal role he played in the war between Assassins and Templars, but also from his status as a member of an important bloodline of Assassins.

Born into the Brotherhood to a Muslim father and Christian mother, Altaïr was raised in the Assassin community situated in Masyaf. Altaïr's mother died during childbirth and he spent his early life training under Assassin leader Al Mualim, whose influence surpassed that of his own father. In 1176, during the first siege of Masyaf, Ahmad Sofian, an Assassin and father to Abbas, Altaïr's best friend, was captured by the Saracens and forced to reveal the name of the Assassin who had infiltrated Saladin's tent: Umar—Altaïr's father. Ahmad was nearly executed, but at the last moment Umar stood up to take his place. Filled with remorse, Ahmad committed suicide in Altaïr's home, when the boy was just 11 years old. When Altaïr revealed this to the Assassins, Abbas became convinced that he was spreading lies about his father and grew to hate him.

Altaïr's heritage granted him a unique gift known as Eagle Vision. This gave him heightened intuitive ability and complimented his carefully sharpened fighting skills, enabling his meteoric rise to prominence and recognition as a Master Assassin by the age of 25. However, while his abilities made him perhaps the deadliest and most adept member of the Order, they also fuelled his arrogance, which would prove to be his major weakness.

In 1191, Altaïr was sent on a critical mission to recover a valuable artifact, referred to by Al Mualim as the "Templar treasure". Altaïr traveled on assignment to Jerusalem with the Al-Sayf brothers, Malik and Kadar. The Assassins soon found the treasure's location underneath Solomon's Temple. It was there that Altaïr's pride and recklessness eclipsed his adherence to the tenets of the Assassin's

> AN OLDER ALTAIR

Creed, which he carelessly violated over the course of the operation. These transgressions climaxed when Altaïr heedlessly attacked Robert de Sable, Grand Master of the Templars, despite the warnings of his comrade Malik. De Sable easily bested Altaïr and forced him to abandon his team and return to Masyaf empty-handed. The scope of his mistakes was only compounded when a grievously wounded Malik returned to Masyaf, revealing that he had managed to salvage the artifact against all odds despite Altaïr's failure. The feat, however, cost Malik one of his arms and the life of his brother while Altaïr's transgressions resulted in a Templar siege on Masyaf. Even though the siege was unsuccessful—thanks to Altaïr's efforts—Al Mualim rebuked Altaïr in front of the entire Assassin community, declaring him a traitor to the Creed. He then stabbed him with a dagger.

Altaïr awoke to realize that his "death" had been orchestrated by Al Mualim as the symbolic beginning of his redemption. Altaïr was stripped of his equipment and demoted to novice. However, Al Mualim offered him the chance to regain his honor and dignity, and named his price: the assassination of nine individuals whose involvement in the raging Crusades only worsened its carnage. By promoting peace in the Levant through the elimination of these warmongers, and cooperating respectfully with his Assassin brethren, Altaïr would find within himself the peace and humility he lacked.

Altaïr accepted the opportunity for redemption and began to hunt his targets across the Levant, visiting Damascus, Acre and Jerusalem. He expressed no enjoyment in being forced to depend on other Assassins in the field. This working dynamic was particularly unpleasant in Jerusalem, where Malik Al-Sayf had been relocated as the head of the local Assassin Bureau. While their earlier relationship had been one of strained respect, Altaïr's blunders beneath Solomon's Temple earned him Malik's unreserved hatred. However, Malik's loathing and Al Mualim's displeasure did not deter Altaïr from continuing his mission, which before long filled him with a profound sense of doubt.

As he assassinated his targets, Altaïr discovered that his victims were hardly typical despots or criminals; they were actually working together towards some ambiguous vision of peace. Finally, Altaïr demanded the truth from Al Mualim who told him that his targets were all Templars working alongside Robert de Sable and scheming to create a "new world" together.

Al Mualim went on to explain that the treasure recovered in Solomon's Temple—the Apple—was one of many items known as Pieces of Eden, ancient artifacts which allowed their users to influence others. According to him, the Apple of Eden was the key to the Templars' plan, capable of giving them control over the Levant and beyond. It was to prevent the Templars from accomplishing their sinister ambitions that Al Mualim had ordered its recovery. This knowledge gave Altaïr a subtler perspective towards his mission. He began to feel regret for his former actions as well as genuine devotion to the cause for which the Assassins stood. Instead of a reckless Assassin fuelled by his own ambitions, he became acutely aware of his responsibilities towards both his Order and the population of the Levant.

After killing the first eight targets, Altaïr sought Robert de Sable, Grand Master of the Knights Templar. He tracked de Sable to Jerusalem, following news that he was attending the funeral of one of Altaïr's victims, the former self-appointed regent of Jerusalem Majd Addin. The funeral proved to be a trap set by de Sable to lure Altaïr into the open, and the Assassin walked straight into it. Nevertheless, Altaïr defeated the Templar soldiers and closed in on de Sable, but was surprised to find in his stead a decoy—the Grand Master's personal steward, Maria Thorpe. She revealed to Altaïr that it was de Sable's intention to unite Saracen and Crusader forces against the Assassins, using Altaïr's slaughter of the Templars on either side as evidence that they shared a common enemy. Altaïr spared Maria and reported the evolving crisis to Malik, encouraging him to investigate the matter further. He then raced after de Sable.

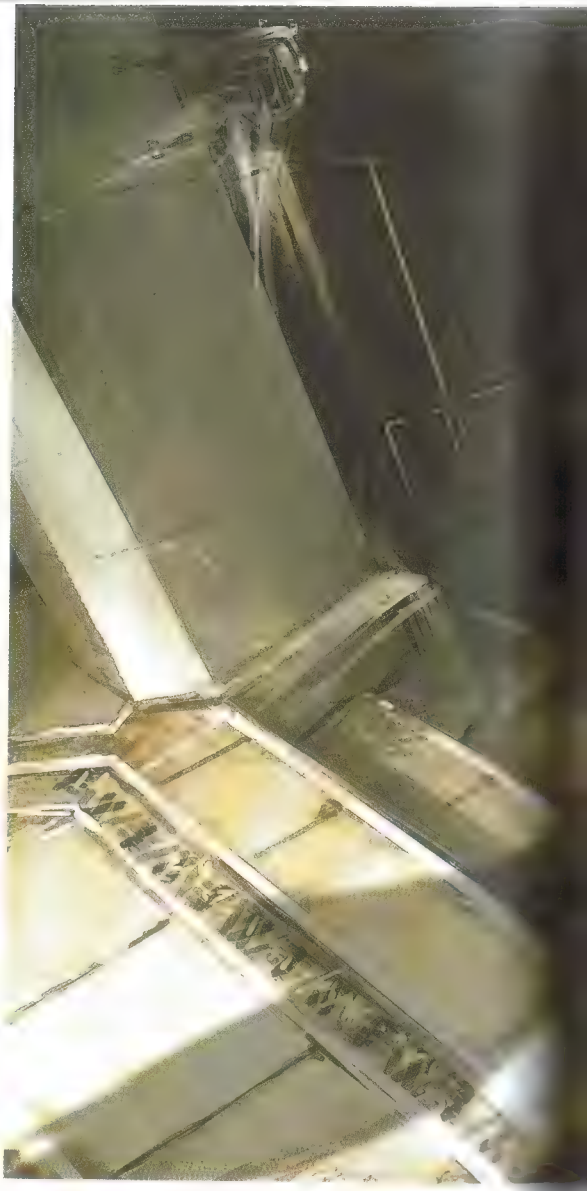
Reaching the battlegrounds of Arsuf, where Saracens had engaged the Crusader troops, Altaïr fought his way through the colliding armies until he reached the camp of King Richard the Lionheart, leader of the Crusaders, whom de Sable served. Richard listened to the conflicting testimonies of Altaïr and de Sable and, unable to decide which one to trust, allowed them to fight to the death, believing that God would spare the life of the righteous. Altaïr defeated de Sable. In his dying breath, the Grand Master revealed the identity of a tenth Templar: Al Mualim. According to de Sable, the true purpose of Altaïr's killings was to dispose of Templars who were aware of the existence of the Apple of Eden, so Al Mualim

could lay sole claim to it. Altaïr parted ways with King Richard in peace before returning to Masyaf to confront his master.

Altaïr found his home city under the control of Al Mualim, who had used the power of the Apple to brainwash its citizens. Assassins were dispatched to kill him, but Malik arrived with his own men to fight alongside Altaïr. Malik related his discovery of evidence, which confirmed Altaïr's suspicions about Al Mualim's deceit. Both devastated by Al Mualim's treachery and impressed by Altaïr's newfound wisdom, Malik at last gave Altaïr his full trust, acknowledging him as his superior.

While Malik went to contain the situation with the enslaved Assassins, Altaïr entered Masyaf's fortress alone, only to find himself at the mercy of Al Mualim and the Apple of Eden. The treacherous leader explained the Apple's ability to create illusions that could be used to control the minds of men. According to him, only through this power could humankind be led to true peace. Altaïr was able to partially resist the effects of the Apple, but was still forced to battle phantoms of the fallen Templars as well as imitations of Al Mualim conjured from the Apple. He overcame these enemies, and then engaged Al Mualim, defeating him and putting an end to his life. In his dying words, Al Mualim predicted that regardless of Altaïr's noble intentions, he would not be able to destroy the Apple.

With the death of Al Mualim, Altaïr became the new leader of the Assassins. Taking the helm in the war against the Templars, he investigated the movement of their forces from Acre to Cyprus, following the rise of their new leader, Armand Bouchart. Simultaneously, Altaïr began keeping a journal reflecting on his life as an Assassin and his investigations into the Apple of Eden which, as his former mentor had predicted, he could not bring himself to destroy. His pursuit of the Templars brought him into contact once more with Maria Thorpe, who had fallen out of favor within the ranks of the Order since de Sable's death. Maria refused to cooperate with Altaïr, so he captured her and brought her with him to the Cyprian city of Limassol. With the entire island under Bouchart's control, Altaïr met with Alexander, an ally of the Assassins and the head of the local resistance against the Templars. Alexander gladly housed Maria in the resistance's hideout in Limassol, and assisted Altaïr in his search for a Templar Archive—a place in which he suspected the Templars hid ancient artifacts.



Unfortunately the search for the Archive's location was interrupted by a Templar attack on the hideout and led to Maria's subsequent escape to Bouchart, who despite her loyalty ordered her imprisoned. Altaïr assassinated her new captors, bringing her with him once again as he followed Bouchart to Kyrenia. The Assassin attempted to explain to Maria the corruption that tainted the Templars' ambitions as well as the importance of freedom over strict order and false peace, but to no avail. Upon their arrival Altaïr sought the aid of the resistance's leader in Kyrenia, Barnabas, who asked him to assassinate the merchant Jonas—an alleged traitor to the resistance. Jonas divulged to Altaïr that Bouchart's local officer, Moloch, had placed a bounty on both Altaïr and Maria, forcing the Assassin to neutralize him. Meanwhile, Maria was recaptured by agents of Moloch's son, Shalim. Altaïr then realized that Barnabas was actually an imposter and an agent of the Templars—the

real Barnabas having been executed a day before Altaïr's arrival in Kyrenia.

The Assassin hunted Shalim and, after learning that Maria had managed to slip away from her captors, found her disguised and en route to Saint Hilarion Castle. At the Castle, Maria questioned Shalim's brother, Shahar, about the true ambitions of the Templars. Altaïr arrived to fight Shalim just as Shahar revealed the truth to Maria, who left the scene, leaving Altaïr to fight both brothers. After their deaths, the Assassin returned to Limassol, suspecting it to be the true location of the Archive. He found the city in poor condition, with the resistance in disarray and Templar soldiers running rampant through the city. Furthermore, incidents continued to occur as a result of Bouchart's agent sent to bring down the resistance; the same man who had impersonated Barnabas. He was now using Jonas's murder to turn to resistance against Altaïr. This revelation came too late however, as the agent murdered Alexander and discovered Altaïr had the Apple in his possession. Now convinced of the Templars' intentions to abuse the Apple's power, Maria reappeared just in time to kill Bouchart's agent and prevent him from attacking Altaïr, whom she then led into the underground Archive to fight the Templars. In the ensuing confrontation, Bouchart explained that the Templars were not amassing their resources at Cyprus, but were in fact moving them elsewhere to protect them from the Assassins. With the Archive emptied, Altaïr fought and killed Bouchart, then escaped with Maria.

Following the events on Cyprus, Altaïr told Maria of his desire to pursue a scholarly life, seeking deeper understanding of the Apple and the universe. Maria decided to join him, eventually becoming his wife. She bore his sons, and Altaïr spent much of the rest of his life studying the Apple. Using the knowledge

he uncovered, Altaïr developed various techniques and equipment meant to augment the abilities of an evolved Assassin; such innovations included a poison-bearing hidden blade and a nigh-invincible set of armor. It was through the Apple that he glimpsed both the distant past—witnessing the cataclysm that had destroyed a good portion of Those Who Came Before—as well as what was to come. This knowledge motivated him to prepare the Codex as a guide for the eventual "prophet".

As leader of the Assassins, Altaïr implemented various reforms, discarding many of the ceremonial elements that had defined the Order. These reforms marked the revitalization of the Brotherhood into an underground organization. Eventually, whispers reached him of the growing strength of the tyrant Genghis Khan. Believing a Piece of Eden played a part in Khan's rise to power, Altaïr and Maria, along with Darim, their oldest son, journeyed east to protect humankind against the impending threat.

Altaïr had put Malik in charge of Masyaf and the Brotherhood during his absence, and left his youngest son, Sef, with him. While he was away, Abbas, Altaïr's former friend and now bitter rival, killed Sef and shifted the blame to Malik—an action which allowed him to become leader of the Brotherhood. Upon Altaïr's return, Abbas had Malik murdered and accused Altaïr of the crime. A confrontation ensued during which Altaïr, in his rage, used the Apple to put an end to Abbas' machinations, an action which accidentally caused the death of Maria. Devastated, Altaïr left Masyaf, leaving the Brotherhood under Abbas' control. It was not until 20 years later that Altaïr returned to set things right. By then, the Assassins of Masyaf were eager to welcome their leader home, and help Altaïr rid the world of Abbas for good.

Once again in charge of the Brotherhood, Altaïr had a library built in Masyaf. In 1257, he invited the explorers Maffeo and Niccolò Polo to visit it. The Assassin recounted his life story to Niccolò, who would later write it down and pass it on to his son, Marco. Meanwhile, Altaïr had begun to gradually dissolve the Brotherhood in Masyaf with the intention of spreading the Assassins throughout the world, with the help of the Polo brothers. Later that year, the Mongols—seeking vengeance for the death of Genghis Khan—besieged Masyaf. Altaïr helped Maffeo and Niccolò flee the city, giving them five Memory Seals, which doubled as keys to his mysterious library. He also entrusted his Codex to the explorers, along with many tools and personal items, trusting that the brothers would establish Assassin cells throughout the world.

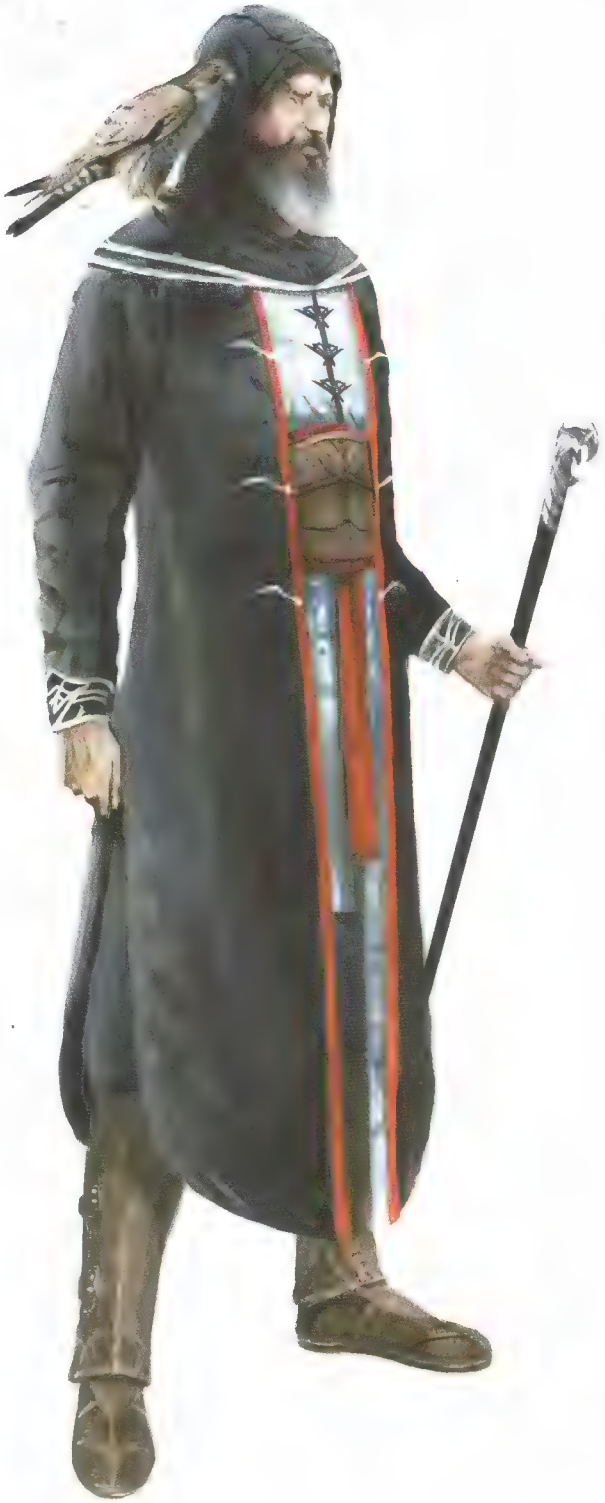
3 : C : 1
#A

AL MUALIM

Al Mualim (unknown - 1191) was leader of the Assassin Brotherhood in the Levant during the Third Crusade, governing the Assassins from Masyaf, Syria. With the Levant saturated with violence brought on by the struggle between Crusaders and Saracens, Al Mualim taught that peace must be actively cultivated in both the external world and within oneself. Furthermore, he believed that certain people were genuinely and irreversibly corrupt. Such people were a threat to peace, and thus deserved to be destroyed. With this understanding, the Assassins serving Al Mualim were agents of both peace and destruction, carrying out the deaths of those deemed too wicked to deserve life.

However, Al Mualim's public teachings served to disguise his affinity to the ideology of the Knights Templar, who planned to use Pieces of Eden to enforce order. Upon the discovery of the Apple of Eden in 1191, by Templar Grand Master Robert de Sable, Al Mualim sent his best disciple, Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad, to relieve him of his treasure. The mission nearly ended in catastrophe when Altaïr's refusal to adhere to Al Mualim's Creed inadvertently triggered a Templar siege upon Masyaf. The Apple was nevertheless delivered to Al Mualim by Altaïr's comrade, Malik A-Sayf. Al Mualim rewarded Malik but reduced Altaïr to the rank of novice, making it clear that the only option available to him to restore his honor was to eliminate nine targets whose actions perpetuated the worst horrors of the Crusades. According to Al Mualim, as Altaïr furthered peace throughout the Levant, so would he further peace within himself.

It was not long before Altaïr discovered that his targets were Templar leaders bent on conquering the Levant. This justified his mission until he learned that Al Mualim had been part of the original Templar plot, and that the real motivation behind his assignment was to eliminate any potential contender for the Apple of Eden. When Altaïr returned to Masyaf to confront his master, Al Mualim had already used the Apple to bend the city's populace to his will. Altaïr nonetheless killed him, and succeeded him as leader.



3 : C : 1
#B

MARIA THORPE

Maria Thorpe was an Englishwoman who traveled to the Holy Land during the Third Crusade to fight alongside the Crusaders. She became the personal steward of Templar Grand Master Robert de Sable, but eventually sided with the Assassins.

Born and raised in England, she was exceptionally resistant to the standards of feminine decorum of the time. Growing up she preferred to dress and act as a boy, dreaming of honor and glory. Her parents eventually pressed her into marriage, but the arrangement did not last much longer than a year, and Maria decided to leave England for the Holy Land.

Masqueraded as a male knight, Maria trained and fought alongside other Crusaders, and soon won great renown for herself. Eventually, she earned a position as the steward of Robert de Sable, Grand Master of the Knights Templar, despite the fact that he had uncovered her secret. The opportunity to serve in the war and live out her dream guaranteed Maria's complete loyalty to de Sable, making her wholly willing to give her life for his should the need have arisen.

Maria's fierce dedication to de Sable was put to the test in 1191. At the time Assassin Altaïr Ibn-La Ahad had been sent to kill the nine most powerful Templars in the Holy Land. After assassinating the first eight, Altaïr's sought to end de Sable's life. However the Grand Master knew of this and intended to use Altaïr's slaughter of his comrades as evidence to persuade the leaders of both the Crusaders and Saracens to stop fighting one another and instead concentrate their efforts against a common enemy: the Assassins.

De Sable left to broker the alliance in the city of Arsuf while Maria remained behind in Jerusalem.

Knowing that Altaïr was seeking de Sable, Maria, disguised as the Grand Master, attended the funeral of one of his victims, hoping it would give her the opportunity to ambush the Assassin. As expected, Altaïr walked straight into the trap and Templar soldiers soon cornered him. However, Altaïr was able to fend them off and he eventually pinned Maria down, believing her to be de Sable. He was stunned to discover otherwise, and his astonishment only increased as Maria told him of de Sable's plan. Altaïr spared Maria, but eventually assassinated de Sable in Arsuf.

Maria's rank within the Templars dropped considerably after de Sable's death. Armand Bouchart, the new leader, did not hold her in high esteem, and he believed that consorting with women was a violation of Templar conduct. In his mind, Maria was a living example of de Sable's weakness and the reason for his demise. Bouchart's antagonistic attitude towards Maria was such that her comrades advised her against coming with them to the new Templar base on the island of Cyprus. Although frustrated, she resigned herself to reaching Cyprus by other means, but before she could do so Altaïr, who had by then become Grand Master of the Assassin Brotherhood, found her.

Maria refused to divulge information about Templar activity on Cyprus, but Altaïr brought her along on his voyage to Limassol, where she was handed over to Alexander, a member of the resistance against Templar rule on Cyprus. Maria escaped, but she made the mistake of turning to Bouchart for aid. Bouchart responded by ordering her imprisonment. Altaïr intercepted her captors and liberated her, though her condemnation by Bouchart only fueled Maria's hatred towards Altaïr. Even so, he persuaded her to "behave" by offering her protection against Bouchart and reminding her that he was her only chance to learn anything about the Apple of Eden, and therefore win her way back into Templar favor.

When Bouchart fled to Kyrenia, Altaïr, with Maria in tow, chartered a ship in pursuit. Despite Maria's animosity, Altaïr tried to show her the importance of human freedom. Eventually, Maria became disillusioned with the Templars and led Altaïr to the fabled Templar Archive. There, she fought Bouchart and his men alongside Altaïr. During the confrontation, Bouchart neutralized her, but he fell to Altaïr's blade. Finally united against a common cause, Maria and Altaïr made peace and helped one another escape the collapsing Archive.

Her trials on Cyprus complete, Maria headed east with Altaïr. She eventually became his wife and the mother of his two children: Darim and Sef. In the decades that followed, Maria helped Altaïr shape the Order of the Assassins at Masyaf into a new kind of fighting force, one with a less insular and more egalitarian hierarchy. For the first time in many centuries, women too were allowed to join, though this change was slow to take root.

In 1217, spurred by reports of the growing Mongol menace, Altaïr and Maria left Masyaf with their son Darim to give aid to the Assassins under threat from Genghis Kahn's army. After a period of 10 years away, they returned to find their youngest son, Sef, dead and Masyaf in disarray, under the chaotic leadership of Abbas, one of Altaïr's long-time rivals. Sadly, when they confronted Abbas about their son's murder, Altaïr lost his temper and attempted to use the Apple of Eden on Abbas and his followers. Altaïr's rash action backfired, and Maria was killed in the ensuing melee. At the time of her death, Maria Thorpe was approximately 67 years old.

3 : C : 1
#C

MALIK AL-SAYF

Malik Al-Sayf (1165 - 1227) was a member of the Assassin Brotherhood in the late 12th century. The elder brother of Kadar Al-Sayf, a journeyman of the Brotherhood, Malik was an experienced Assassin

In 1191, during a mission in Jerusalem to retrieve the Apple of Eden, Malik and his brother Kadar accompanied Altaïr Ibn'La-Ahad into the ruins of Solomon's Temple. Altaïr's brash actions and disrespect for the Creed forced Malik and Kadar to confront Templar Robert de Sable and his soldiers on their own. Though heavily outnumbered and grievously wounded, Malik successfully retrieved the Apple and brought it to Masyaf. The completion of the mission came at the cost of his brother's life, and Malik's wounds resulted in the amputation of his left arm. Though he was honored for his work, Malik's injury meant he was no longer suited for combat, and he was stripped of his rank as an active Assassin.

Malik was sent to Jerusalem where he became the leader of the city's Assassins' Bureau, one of the main safe houses of the Brotherhood. Reduced to the scholarly rank of *rafiq*, Malik aided Altaïr during his assassination missions against the slaver Talal, the regent Majd Addin and finally Robert de Sable himself. Initially Malik made his disdain for Altaïr clearly known, and blamed the Assassin for the loss of both his brother and his arm. However, he eventually regained respect for Altaïr as he proved that he had grown beyond his formerly

brash ways. Malik helped Altaïr during his confrontation with the treacherous Assassin leader, Al Mualim.

Malik showed a great deal of respect for the Creed and Tenets of the Brotherhood. Though he was often harsh and brusque with Altaïr, his instruction was usually wise and sound. He was perceptive and showed himself to be a skilled information gatherer. Even with the loss of his arm, Malik proved to be a strong combatant and a good marksman during the assault on Masyaf. In spite of his bitterness toward Altaïr, Malik's criticism and instruction helped to provide him with the wisdom and perspective he needed to eventually become leader of the Assassin Order. Malik remained a member of the Brotherhood after Altaïr became its leader, and continued to advise him as well.

When Altaïr left with his wife and oldest son to fight the Mongols, he left Malik in charge of Masyaf. During this period, Abbas—an ambitious Assassin and Altaïr's rival—orchestrated the murder of Altaïr's youngest son, who had remained in Masyaf. Abbas ensured that Malik would be falsely accused of the deed, which allowed him to take control of the Brotherhood. When Altaïr returned from Mongolia, Abbas had Malik murdered, accusing Altaïr of this deed.

Brotherhood as a Council was established with Abbas at its head. In order to ensure his hold on the Assassins, he then had Malik murdered and accused Altaïr of this deed upon his return from Mongolia.

This first open conflict between Abbas and his rival resulted in another grievous loss for Altaïr, as Maria perished when he unwisely attempted to use the Apple of Eden to put an end to Abbas' machinations. With his hated opponent fleeing Masyaf in the aftermath of their confrontation, Abbas claimed the leadership of the Brotherhood. The following years saw a period of misery for the populace under Abbas' control, and it was not until Altaïr returned twenty years later that matters were set right. The Assassins welcomed their former Grand Master's return, despite his advanced age. Though Abbas ordered Altair's death, he was instead the first to fall to an entirely new weapon: the hidden pistol.

3 : C : 1
#D

ABBAS SOFIAN

Abbas (1166 - 1247) was a skilled and respected Assassin, though his personality left something to be desired. Humorless, with an almost fetishistic passion for the Brotherhood, he loathed both Al Mualim's corruption of the Creed and Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad's loose interpretation of it. Abbas suffered silently during Altaïr's reign as leader, hiding his jealousy and disrespect, even as he studiously worked to gain more power and regard under Altaïr's egalitarian administration. When Altaïr left with his wife Maria and his oldest son to fight the Mongols, Abbas took more overt steps to gain power. Among those strategic moves, he orchestrated the murder of Altaïr's youngest son, Sef, while ensuring that Malik Al-Sayf was falsely accused of the deed. Further subterfuge saw him gain more control of the

ENEMIES

3 : C : 2
#A

ALTAÏR'S TARGETS

> SIBRAND

Tamir (unknown - 1191) was a Damascene merchant and member of the Knights Templar. A specialist in black market arms dealing, he sold to both the Crusaders and Saracens in an attempt to prolong the conflict in the Holy Land and further the Templar plan to exploit the chaos and eventually seize control. A ruthless businessman, Tamir was swift to take violent action against those who failed to measure up to his exacting standards. He was the first of nine Templars whom Al Mualim ordered Assassin Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad to kill. After a long investigation, Altaïr found and assassinated Tamir in a Damascus marketplace. Tamir expressed no regret for the deaths his wares had caused, instead taking pride in the fact that he was serving a higher purpose.

Garnier de Naplouse (unknown - 1191) was a French knight, the 9th Grand Master of the Knights Hospitalier and also a secret member of the Templar Order. Following the capture of Acre by Richard the Lionheart, Garnier set up his hospital in the city's poor district. There he began to gather the ill and insane, subjecting them to painful experimentation in an attempt to cure their ailments. Patients who tried to leave were punished; at least one had his legs broken to prevent further attempts. Despite this apparent cruelty, Garnier truly believed he was helping these people, and considered himself a man of science and reason. He was killed by Altaïr in his own hospital.

Talal (unknown - 1191) was a Jerusalem-based slave trader and member of the Templar Order. Protected from the law by a loyal corps of mercenaries, Talal was responsible for kidnapping many poor citizens of Jerusalem and selling them into slavery. Altaïr, sent by Al Mualim, tracked him down to his headquarters, but Talal had expected the Assassin's arrival and attempted to trap him. Altaïr defeated the mercenaries sent after him and set off after Talal, but the slaver was exceptionally agile and fled across the rooftops. After a chase through the streets Altaïr eventually caught up with his target. With his dying words the slaver claimed that he had in fact been rescuing his victims from poverty and degradation.

Abu'l Nuqoud (unknown - 1191) was an immensely wealthy merchant from Damascus. He helped finance the armies fighting across the Holy Land, on both sides, thus prolonging the conflict and aiding the cause of the Templars. He did this despite his dis-

› GARNIER DE NAPLOUSE

taste for the theologies of both Christians and Muslims, whose respective God he believed judged him an abomination. His obesity, acne-ridden skin and speculated homosexuality made him something of a figure of mockery among the Damascus nobility, though his wealth prevented them from being too openly hostile. Abu'l noted their distaste for him, however, and was deeply hurt. In 1191, he hosted a party for the cream of the Damascene aristocracy, lavishing food and wine upon them. Little did they know that their drink had been poisoned by the vengeful merchant, who gleefully informed them of the fact. Abu'l then ordered his guards to kill anyone who tried to leave. As his guests were slaughtered around him, Altaïr, taking advantage of the chaos, killed Abu'l.

Formerly a scribe, Majd Addin (unknown - 1191) was a member of the Templar Order and *de facto* regent of Jerusalem while Sultan Salah Al'din was away fighting the Crusaders of Richard the Lionheart. In the Sultan's absence, he effectively took control of the city, letting none get in the way. Where Salah Al'din had preached tolerance and mercy, Majd ruled through fear and intimidation. He held public trials, where he personally executed numerous individuals for seemingly minor crimes, including gambling, petty theft and prostitution. In 1191 he captured a member of the Assassin Brotherhood. He was about to publicly execute the man when Altaïr stabbed him with a hidden blade. As he died, Majd admitted that he killed purely for his own personal enjoyment and the feeling of hegemony it gave him; his allegiance to the Templars was purely based upon their ability to grant him the opportunity to exercise that power.

Jubair al Hakim (unknown - 1191) was the chief scholar of Damascus and a member of the Templar Order. Though ostensibly a man of words he began to disapprove of books and learning, believing they did nothing but lead people away from the truth. Jubair even noted that the violence of both Crusaders and Saracens had been inspired by books. To free people from this supposed evil he organized a mass burning of scrolls and other texts throughout Damascus, killing any who opposed him. It was during this event that Altaïr, forced to pick through Jubair's identically-clad followers, found and killed him. As Jubair died he compared himself to Altaïr, claiming that the burning of the books differed little to the Assassin's killing him; both were attempts to silence a point of view which they disagreed with.

Sibrand (unknown - 1191) was a German Crusader and the first recorded Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights, one of several knightly orders present in the Holy Land during the Third Crusade. He was also a member of the Templar Order. As he learned of the deaths of his fellow Templars at the hands of Altaïr, Sibrand grew increasingly paranoid and retreated to the docks of Acre. There, constantly wearing his armor and killing anyone on the slightest suspicion of being a threat, he awaited the coming of the Assassin. Despite these heightened defenses, Altaïr was able to sneak through the docks and board Sibrand's ship, where he slew the Templar. As he died Sibrand told Altaïr of his part in the Templars' plans: he had been tasked with raising a great naval blockade, so as to prevent the monarchs of Europe reinforcing the Crusader armies in the Holy Land when the Templars made their move to seize power.

William of Montferrat (1136 - 1191) was the Crusader Regent of Acre during the Third Crusade, appointed by King Richard I to rule in his absence. Secretly, William was a member of the Templar Order. During his regency, he endeavored to prepare the citizens of Acre for what he and the Templars thought to be the inevitable arrival of a «New World.» Though he believed strongly in the Templar cause, William would never live to see his ambitions come to fruition. He was slain in 1191 by Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad of the Assassin Brotherhood. William was a strict taskmaster and disciplinarian. During his term as regent, he began conscripting citizens and rationing food supplies, and his relationship with his liege, King Richard I, became increasingly strained. In 1191, William executed 3,000 Saracen captives in order to send a message to the enemies of the Templars. Richard, who had intended to use these prisoners to negotiate with the Saracens, found William's behavior unforgivable and publically denounced him. The Brotherhood believed William had intended to betray his king by annexing Acre for himself and for his son, Conrad. Consequently, when the Brotherhood dispatched Altaïr to eliminate William, it was under the premise of freeing Acre from a tyrannical regent.

> WILLIAM OF MONTFERRAT

> ABU L NOOR

> TAMIR

> MAJD ADDIN

> BAHA AL HAKIM

3 : C : 2
#B

ROBERT DE SABLE

Robert de Sable (unknown - 1191) was an Angevin nobleman and Crusader. In 1191, he became Grand Master of the Knights Templar.

When Richard the Lionheart went on Crusade to reclaim Jerusalem in 1190, Robert was quick to join him, and soon became one of his close advisors. De Sable, however, was no ordinary Crusader. Shortly after reaching the Holy Land he took up the post of Grand Master of the Templars, which had been vacant for two years after the death of his predecessor. His goal was to exploit the chaos of the war to seize the region for the Templars and begin to build their "New World".

In 1191 Robert and a handful of soldiers infiltrated Jerusalem to search the ruins of Solomon's Temple for an Apple of Eden. Just as they found the artifact, a trio of Assassins led by Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad ambushed them. Altaïr was driven off and the Templars killed one of his comrades, but the third man, Malik Al-Sayf, despite a serious injury, stole the artifact and fled to the Assassin fortress of Masyaf. De Sable pursued the Assassin to the mountain stronghold, where a traitor opened the gates for his troops, allowing them to storm the city, killing civilians and Assassins alike.

When he arrived at the fortress, de Sable confronted Al Mualim, leader of the Assassins and secretly a Templar. He ordered Al Mualim to return the Apple, but the latter betrayed both the Assassins and Templars, seeking to use the power of the artifact for himself. Al Mualim then signaled to Altaïr—who had also returned to Masyaf— to trigger a trap, which forced de Sable and his soldiers to leave the city.

Following these events, Al Mualim manipulated Altaïr into killing the leading Templars in the Holy Land, and finally sent him against Robert de Sable himself. But de Sable expected the attack and sent his steward, Maria Thorpe, to Jerusalem dressed in his armor as a distraction. In the meantime he joined Richard the Lionheart at the battle of Arsuf, hoping to use the murders perpetrated by Altaïr to persuade Richard and Saladin to make peace and unite against the Assassins. Altaïr pursued him and attempted to expose to Richard de Sable's true motives. The King, unsure of whom to believe, made the two men duel, trusting that God would let the rightful one win. De Sable was defeated. Though mortally wounded, he revealed Al Mualim's treachery to Altaïr before he died.

3 : C : 3
#A

SALADIN

Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb (1138 - 1193), known as Saladin, was a medieval Islamic political and military leader, best known in the Western world for his role in the Third Crusade.

Born in Tikrit, Iraq, Saladin spent his early life in Damascus. Both his father and uncle were soldiers, and Saladin followed in the family tradition. He rose swiftly through the ranks, fighting on behalf of the ruler of Syria, Nur al-din. By 1169 Saladin had become Sultan of Egypt, and from there he turned on his old Syrian masters and captured their lands as well.

Now ruler of a great swathe of the Arabic world, he turned his attentions to the Assassins. In 1176 he led a campaign against them and besieged the fortress of Masyaf. One night, Saladin awoke to find by his bed a poisoned knife and some cakes laid out in the symbol of the Assassins, apparently left there by the Old Man of the Mountain himself. Saladin heeded the warning and left the Assassins to themselves from then on.

In 1180 the crusader states agreed to a truce, but between 1182 and 1187 relations deteriorated rapidly, thanks in part to the provocations of the Templars. In 1187 tensions came to a head and Saladin invaded the crusader states, annihilating a crusader army at Hattin and capturing the king of Jerusalem. He then pushed deep into Christian territories, crowning his victories by recapturing the holy city of Jerusalem.

The fall of Jerusalem prompted the start of the Third Crusade, led by Richard the Lionheart, who arrived in the Holy Land in 1191. Though Richard captured Acre and defeated Saladin at Arsuf, he was unable to retake Jerusalem, and a stalemate ensued. Eventually the two men made peace, codified in the treaty of Ramla in 1192. In return for a strip of coastal land and a guarantee of safety for pilgrims, the Christians gave up their claims to Jerusalem. It was a great victory for Saladin. Yet despite his defeat, King Richard was not bitter, and paid tribute to his opponent's honourable and chivalrous character.

A year later, at the height of his fame and power, Saladin died of a fever, and was buried in Damascus. He remains a hero in much of the Muslim world to the present day.

3 : C : 3
#B

RICHARD I OF ENGLAND

Richard I (1157 - 1199), called "the Lionheart", was King of England and much of France. He was most famous for his role in the Third Crusade.

Prompted by Saladin's recapture of Jerusalem, Richard "took the cross" in 1189, vowing to go on crusade. He was crowned King in September of that year, and after only six months in England he set off for the Holy Land.

During his journey, King Richard scored a series of successes, notably conquering Sicily and Cyprus, retaking Acre, and defeating Saladin at Arsuf. However, he soon realised that he had no hope of seizing Jerusalem. This, combined with the revelation that the conflict was being exploited by the Templars, including his own advisor Robert de Sable, led him to make peace with Saladin. The Lionheart thus headed home in 1192.

3 D

EZIO AUDITORE DA FIRENZE

1459 - 1524

Ezio Auditore da Firenze (1459 - 1524) was a Florentine nobleman and a key figure in the history of the Assassin Brotherhood. Following the example set by his father and his uncle Mario, Ezio spent much of his life fighting against the Templars. Responsible for eliminating several of their members and thwarting much of their plans, his actions eventually earned him the title of Mentor.

The second son of the banker Giovanni Auditore and his wife Maria, Ezio was not told about his Assassin heritage, and his early years were relatively carefree. He carried out errands for his parents, looked after his younger siblings, and brawled with other young nobles (notably Vieri de' Pazzi). Ezio also engaged in a romantic relationship with local beauty Cristina Vespucci. His settled life was disrupted, however, when his father and brothers were arrested and condemned to death in 1476.

The night before the executions were scheduled, Ezio was able to contact his father, who pointed him to a secret chest hidden inside their home. Within, Ezio found his father's Assassin robes and hidden blade, as well as a letter addressed to Uberto Alberti, which proved the family's innocence. Ezio took the letter to Alberti, but he was betrayed; the Auditores' so-called ally had been involved in the plot from the beginning. At just 17, Ezio watched his father and brothers be hanged. He swore to kill Alberti for his treachery, and disappeared into hiding. Fortunately, Ezio still had friends in the city. Firstly he sought shelter at the *Rosa Colta*, a brothel run by the courtesan Paola, who later taught Ezio how to blend into crowds. His lover Cristina Vespucci helped him reclaim and respectfully dispose of the remains of his father and brothers. Ezio also sought the help of Leonardo da Vinci, who used Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad's Codex to repair the hidden blade of his father. Afterwards, Ezio tracked down Alberti and stabbed him to death.

› A YOUNGER EZIO

> AVANT-PLAN

Ezio then fled the city with his mother and sister, intending to head for Spain. He had hoped to stop at the family's ancestral villa in Monteriggioni, but was ambushed on the town's outskirts by his old rival Vieri de' Pazzi, who had also been involved in the plot to kill his family. Ezio was rescued by the timely intervention of his uncle, Mario Auditore, and his mercenaries, who drove off the Pazzi soldiers and took the family in. Though on the surface a regular *condottiero*, Mario was actually leader of the Assassins in Italy. He explained the nature of the Brotherhood to his nephew and trained him in the skills he would need to protect his mother and sister. The family remained in Monteriggioni until 1478, when Ezio declared his intention to continue on to Spain. Before he left, though, news came that Mario had departed for San Gimignano to deal with Vieri de' Pazzi. Feeling compelled to aid his uncle, Ezio helped Mario defeat the Pazzi troops and personally killed Vieri.

During his time in San Gimignano, Ezio observed a clandestine meeting between Vieri, his great-uncle Jacopo, his father Francesco and a mysterious Spaniard—whom Ezio would later discover was Rodrigo Borgia, Grand Master of the Templar Order. The four men had been discussing a plan to murder Lorenzo de' Medici, ruler of Florence, and his brother Giuliano, in order to seize the city in the name of the Templars. Ezio hurried back to Florence and with the aid of La Volpe, an Assassin and the leader of the local Thieves Guild, he saved Lorenzo and assassinated Francesco de' Pazzi. Lorenzo was grateful for Ezio's assistance, and repaid him by clearing his family's name. He also gave Ezio a list of the surviving conspirators responsible for the attempt on his life. Over the next two years, Ezio eliminated them one by one, until he came face to face with Rodrigo Borgia and Jacopo de' Pazzi—just in time to witness Borgia executing Jacopo for his failure to take over Florence. Borgia escaped, but the presence of a third man at the meeting, a Venetian merchant called Emilio Barbarigo, hinted as to his destination. Ezio set off in pursuit.

As he crossed the Apennine Mountains on his way to Venice, Ezio encountered his old friend Leonardo, who was traveling the same way. Though they were attacked by Borgia troops, they made it safely to the town of Forlì, where they hoped to charter a ship for the rest of the journey. There, Ezio encountered Caterina Sforza, ruler of Forlì, stranded on a rock in a lake. He rescued her, and in return she arranged passage on a ship bound to Venice for them.

› EZIO

› AN OLDER EZIO

Upon reaching Venice, Ezio attempted to track down Barbarigo. He turned to the local Thieves Guild, which was run by another Assassin, Antonio de Magianis. In 1485, with the help of Antonio and his *protégé* Rosa, Ezio killed him. While doing so, he uncovered another Templar conspiracy: Carlo Grimaldi, a member of the Venetian Council of Ten, was going to make use of his proximity to the Doge to kill him, so that Marco Barbarigo—a Templar related to Emilio Barbarigo—could take his place. Ezio used a flying machine created by Leonardo to break into the *Palazzo Ducale*, but he was too late to rescue the Doge. He eliminated Grimaldi, but ended up being blamed for the Doge's death. Now the most wanted man in Venice, Ezio fled the city.

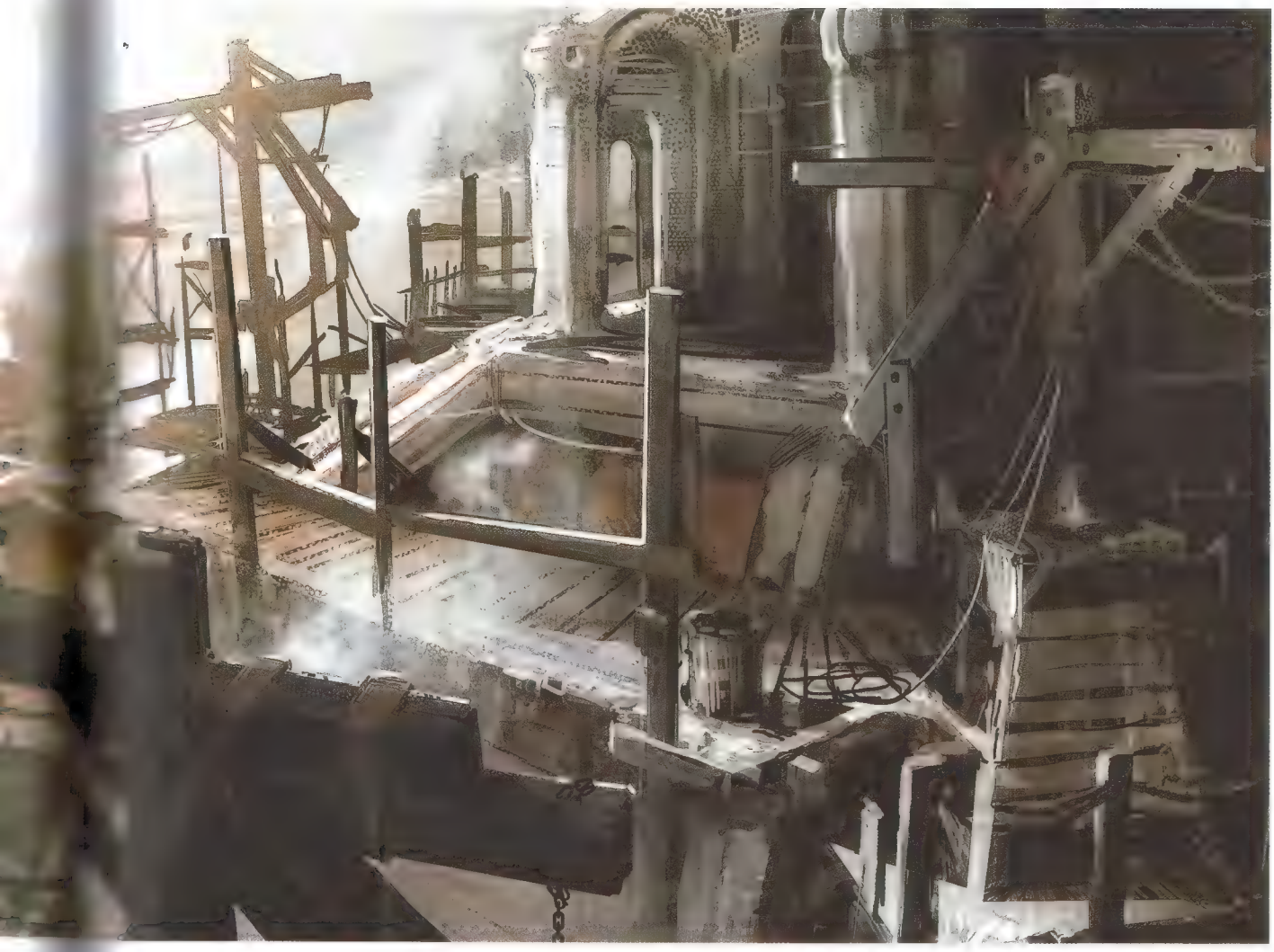
Ezio returned to Venice the next year, during *Carnevale*. Using a mask to hide his identity, he worked with Antonio, Leonardo and Teodora Contanto, leader of the Venetian courtesans, to find a way to assassinate Doge Marco Barbarigo. By winning a series of games, Ezio gained access to the Doge's private party, from where he used a wrist-mounted pistol fashioned by Leonardo to kill him. There now

remained only two conspirators in Venice, Silvio Barbarigo and Dante Moro. The two took refuge in the *Arsenale*, but with the help of the *condottiero* Bartolomeo d'Alviano, Ezio breached its defenses and killed both men. As he died, Barbarigo revealed that the Templars were planning a mysterious journey to Cyprus.

Two years later, on his 28th birthday, Ezio heard that the Templar ship was returning from Cyprus with a mysterious cargo. Masquerading as a guard, he tracked the package, eventually coming face to face with Rodrigo Borgia. The Grand Master had brought the cargo— an Apple of Eden—to Venice in order to fulfill a prophecy from Altaïr's Codex, which connected it to the appearance of a "Prophet". Ezio and Rodrigo fought, but their battle was interrupted by other Assassins, namely Mario, Antonio, Paola, Teodora, La Volpe and Bartolomeo. With the Apple secure, they revealed their true nature and, with the arrival of Niccolò Machiavelli, Ezio was officially inducted into the Brotherhood.

Following the induction ceremony, Machiavelli took Ezio to Forlì, where they hoped to hide the recovered Apple of Eden under the protection of their ally, Caterina Sforza. Machiavelli and Ezio arrived just in time to find the city under attack by Checco and Ludovico Orsi. Along with Caterina, the two Assassins fought off the Orsi brothers' men and slew Checco. In the chaos Ludovico was able to steal the Apple, forcing Ezio to chase after him. Though he caught and killed him, Ezio was seriously injured and collapsed. Just before he passed out, Girolamo Savonarola stole the Apple.

Soon afterward, Luis de Santángel, a member of the Spanish branch of the Brotherhood, came to Ezio



seeking help. Ezio agreed and protected Christoffa Corombo from Templar agents who sought to put a stop to his expedition across the Atlantic. Luis then told Ezio of a concerted campaign against the Spanish Assassins, led by Tomás de Torquemada the Inquisitor General of Spain, who was being manipulated by the Templars. Ezio traveled to Spain, rescuing several Assassins and ensuring that Corombo's proposed journey westwards went ahead.

Ezio then returned to Italy to continue his search for the Apple of Eden. In 1497, he traveled to Florence, where he discovered that the death of Lorenzo 'de' Medici had caused a power vacuum that had been filled by Savonarola, who had used the Apple to manipulate the populace. Ezio also learned that Savonarola's mob had murdered both Cristina Vespucci and her husband. With Machiavelli's assistance, Ezio worked to loosen Savonarola's grip on the city, first by assassinating his lieutenants, and then by taking the Apple from him. The population immediately turned against the monk and began to burn him alive, but Ezio spared Savonarola this gruesome fate, killing him before the flames reached him.

With the Apple safely in their possession, the Assassins met at Monteriggioni to plan further. By closely studying the pages of Altaïr's Codex and exploiting the mysterious technological properties of the Apple, they discovered the location of a secret vault under the Sistine Chapel in Rome. Unfortunately, it seemed that Rodrigo Borgia knew this already, for he had conspired to get himself elected to the position of Pope, taking the name Alexander VI. In 1499 the Assassins mounted an assault on Rome, and Ezio broke into the Sistine Chapel to confront Borgia. The two men fought, with Borgia using the Papal Staff—also a Piece of Eden—against Ezio, who

defended himself with the Apple. Ezio overpowered Rodrigo, but chose to spare his life. He took the Staff and combined it with the Apple to gain access to the hidden vault, where a mysterious apparition calling itself Minerva told him of a tragedy which would befall mankind in the future.

Confused by what he had seen, Ezio returned to Monteriggioni in 1500 and met with the other Assassins, explaining what had happened. Machiavelli was disappointed by his failure to eliminate Borgia and headed straight for Rome to finish the job. Ezio was also visited by Caterina Sforza, who wanted to hire some of Monteriggioni's mercenaries, and the two spent the night together. In the morning the sound of cannon fire awoke them; Rodrigo Borgia had sent his son, Cesare, after Ezio. With the mercenaries, he was able to hold off Cesare's troops long enough for the city's population to flee, but in the process Mario was killed, Ezio heavily injured, Caterina Sforza captured, and the Apple of Eden taken.

Ezio rode straight for Rome, but lost consciousness on the way due to his injuries. He awoke to find himself being cared for in Rome, having being carried there by an unknown figure—Ezio would later learn that his savior was none other than Machiavelli. He made contact with Machiavelli, the *de facto* leader of the Assassins. Working from a secret base on Tiber Island, the two men began to attack the Borgias. First, Ezio broke into the *Castel Sant'Angelo* and rescued Caterina. He and Machiavelli then focused on weakening the Borgias' hold on Rome in numerous ways: Ezio destroyed Borgia towers, recruited and trained an army of Assassins and dispatched Cesare's key lieutenants. He also made contact with his old friend Leonardo, who was at the time being forced to create war machines for Cesare. Leonardo

informed Ezio of their locations, and he subsequently destroyed them. For his achievements, Ezio was named Mentor of the Assassins by Machiavelli.

By 1503, Ezio thought the Borgias had been weakened enough to risk an attack upon them directly. Breaking into the *Castel Sant'Angelo* for a second time, Ezio witnessed Cesare and Rodrigo argue. Rodrigo attempted to poison his son, but Cesare, warned by his sister Lucrezia, instead killed his father. This proved to be a mistake, for without papal protection Cesare was vulnerable, and the next Pope, Julius II, had him arrested.

Ezio reclaimed the Apple of Eden and used it against the remaining Borgia forces, driving them from Rome entirely. He then set out about dealing with Borgia supporters throughout Italy, but while doing so found that Cesare had escaped from papal custody. Ezio was unable to prevent Cesare's flight, but the Apple of Eden told him of his enemy's eventual destination: Spain. The Apple then let Ezio know that it should be relinquished, and he hid it in a temple under the *Colosseo*, where it remained undisturbed for five hundred years.

Following this, Ezio, Leonardo and Machiavelli journeyed to Spain in pursuit of Cesare. Though Leonardo returned home and Machiavelli was seriously wounded, Ezio eventually tracked his enemy to the town of Viana, which Cesare was laying siege to on behalf of the King of Navarre. He caught up with Cesare on the battlements, and threw him to his death.

With the Borgias gone for good, Ezio shifted his focus to more political matters. He helped stabilize the Assassins in Italy, improving lines of communication from Sicily to Venice and standardizing training methods for recruits. In 1509, while examining papers and documents left behind by his late uncle, Ezio came across a letter written by his own father. In it, Giovanni Auditore mentioned a locked library hidden below Masyaf castle, the birthplace and home of Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad. Spurred on by curiosity, Ezio set off in late 1510 to locate this library.

For ten months he traveled the Mediterranean, getting his first real taste of seafaring and the East, finally arriving at Masyaf in mid 1511. There, to his surprise, he found a host of encamped Templars fighting behind the old Byzantine crest. After a brief, intense conflict, Ezio was able to determine the purpose of the Templars' presence—they too hoped to

> EZIO IN LEGIONAIRE GARB

> EZIO IN ASSASSIN GARB

gain entrance to the library, having recently discovered one of its five keys hidden beneath the Ottoman Sultan's palace in Constantinople.

Led by the writings of Niccolò Polo, father to Marco and the man responsible for bringing the Creed to Italy, Ezio hurried to Constantinople with the hope of beating the Templars to the remaining keys. Upon his arrival, he quickly fell in with the Ottoman Assassins and their leader, Yusuf Tazim, establishing a fast friendship that proved invaluable to Ezio's search. After helping Yusuf secure the Galata District from a ferocious Byzantine attack, Ezio turned his attention back to acquiring the keys. With the help of Turkish cartographer Piri Reis, he located Niccolò Polo's former trading post, a building then occupied by a beautiful Venetian expatriate named Sofia Sartor. It was there, in the Yerebatan Cistern below the trading post, that Ezio located another Masyaf key, as well as an encrypted map. With Sofia's aid, Ezio learned that this map pointed to the location of ancient books that would reveal where to find the Masyaf Keys.

Once he had found all but the last key, and knowing that the Templars had it in their possession, Ezio spent much of his time in the city looking for the source of their leadership, a search that led him straight to the Ottoman royal family. After rescuing young Prince Suleiman from a Byzantine attack, Ezio quickly gained his trust and together they conducted a secret investigation of their own, trying to determine the loyalties of various men close to Suleiman's grandfather, Sultan Bayezid II.

After some twists and blind alleys, the result of their investigation revealed the identity of Manuel

Palaiologos, nephew of the last Byzantine Emperor, Constantine XI, and presumptive heir to his once great Empire. After some difficulty, Ezio tracked Manuel to a hidden city in Cappadocia and killed him, recovering the final Masyaf key for himself. But this was not the end of his troubles. Ezio inadvertently uncovered a plot much larger than he had first imagined when Ahmet, uncle to Suleiman and presumptive heir to the Ottoman throne, revealed himself to be a Templar too.

Demanding the Masyaf keys for himself, Ahmet offered Ezio a surprising and upsetting trade—the keys for the life of Sofia Sartor. Ezio, furious, acquiesced, for Ahmet's scheme was too well planned. But, through quick thinking and extraordinary skill, Ezio was able to rescue Sofia and recover the keys in a final confrontation that might have ended badly, were it not for the sudden arrival of Ahmet's brother Selim, newly ordained as the next Ottoman Sultan. Selim murdered his brother, and banished Ezio from his Empire, a sentence Ezio was not interested in contesting.

Returning to Masyaf in the spring of 1512, with Sofia by his side, Ezio finally opened the library, only to find it empty of all books. In their stead was the skeleton of Altaïr, seated as if waiting to greet a guest. After further investigation, Ezio discovered a shocking secret—that the Apple of Eden Altaïr had acquired 300 years earlier was here, and was not the same Apple that Ezio had owned for so many years. At the moment of this realization, Altaïr's Apple burst to life in a flurry of light and sound, revealing another ancient message left behind by the First Civilization. After hearing this message, Ezio realized the true purpose of his life: he was a conduit... a link between the distant past and future. He was a messenger.

Returning to Italy shortly thereafter, Ezio retired from the Assassin Brotherhood and married his true love, Sofia. Together they raised two children on a small villa outside Florence, where Ezio spent his remaining years growing grapes, making wine, and attempting to write his memoirs. He remained close friends with those he had met through the Assassins—Leonardo da Vinci and Niccolò Machiavelli most notably—but apart from a brief visit by a dedicated Chinese Assassin named Shao Jun in 1524, he kept his distance from the Brotherhood.

In 1524, after a lifetime of intense fighting and incredible heroism, Ezio Auditore passed away suddenly in a Florentine piazza at the age of 65, his wife by his side. While the precise circumstances of his death remain a mystery, the prevailing opinion holds that Ezio, having suffered from chronic ailments for many years, finally succumbed to the injuries acquired during his three decades as one of the most talented and devoted Assassins the Brotherhood had ever known.

3 · D : 1
#A

GIOVANNI AUDITORE

Giovanni Auditore (1436 - 1476) was a Florentine nobleman, banker and leading member of the Assassin Brotherhood. He was father to Ezio Auditore and three other children.

Giovanni was trained from an early age in the ways of the Assassins. He left his hometown of Monteriggioni in 1454 for Florence to become a banker. Giovanni cultivated close ties with the ruling Medici family, at one point saving Lorenzo de Medici from drowning, an event which gained him Lorenzo's enduring gratitude. In Florence Giovanni also met his wife, Maria, and by 1463 he had four children with her: Federico, Ezio, Claudia and Petruccio.

In 1476 Giovanni attempted to assassinate Templar Grand Master Rodrigo Borgia. Though he failed, he discovered a Templar conspiracy to murder Galeazzo Maria Sforza, Duke of Milan. Giovanni rushed to save the duke, but was too late. Afraid that the Templars would target Florence next, he decided to continue his investigation, but his actions did not go unnoticed. Through their agent Uberto Alberti, *Gonfaloniere* of Florence, the Templars arrested Giovanni and two of his sons on charges of treason. They were sentenced to death and hanged in the *Piazza della Signoria*.

3 : D : 1
#B

MARIA AUDITORE

Maria Auditore (1432 - 1504) was an Italian noblewoman, wife of Giovanni Auditore and mother of Ezio Auditore.

Born into a wealthy but overprotective family, by the age of 16 Maria grew bored of her restricted lifestyle. She was allowed to open a bakery within the family's *palazzo*, and it was there that she met her future husband Giovanni. By 1463 she and Giovanni had had four children, and both had been inducted into the Assassin Order.

In 1476 her world was thrown into disarray when her husband and two of her sons were hanged as a result of a Templar conspiracy. Her surviving son, Ezio, escorted her and his sister Claudia to safety at the family home of Monteriggioni, but the experience so traumatized Maria that for many years she was unable to speak, and spent her days in prayer.

By 1500, with Ezio's help, Maria had recovered, but she was again forced to move when Cesare Borgia's forces destroyed Monteriggioni. She and her daughter Claudia then relocated to Rome. When Claudia took over leadership of the Roman courtesans, Maria stepped in to assist her daughter in the management of the city's main establishment, the *Rosa in Fiore*.

3 : D : 1
#C

CLAUDIA AUDITORE

Claudia Auditore (1461 - unknown) was a Florentine noblewoman. The third and only female child of Maria and Giovanni Auditore, Claudia devoted much of her life to helping her brother Ezio. While a somewhat difficult and spoiled girl in her early years, the unfortunate circumstances into which she was thrust made her develop a varied and useful skill set: over her lifetime she was an accountant, a brothel madam, and eventually an Assassin.

In 1476 Claudia was betrothed to Duccio de Luca, but their engagement was broken off due to Duccio's infidelity. Shortly afterwards, her life was thrown into disarray when Templar conspirators arrested and executed her father and two of her brothers. Her surviving sibling, Ezio, had Claudia and her mother hidden in a brothel under the protection of an Assassin, Paola, while he sought revenge on the men responsible. Once this was achieved, they relocated to the family's villa in Monteriggioni.

In Monteriggioni, Claudia took care of the bookkeeping, repairing the damage done to the villa by years of neglect under her uncle Mario Auditore. She proved to be a natural, and the town's economy flourished. Claudia resided there for over twenty years until 1500, when on her 39th birthday, Papal forces under the command of Cesare Borgia assaulted the town and slew her uncle. Claudia escaped and made her way to Rome in order to aid her brother Ezio in his fight against the Borgia. She took over the running of a Roman brothel, the *Rosa in Fiore* (the "Rose in Bloom") and used her extensive network of courtesans to gather intelligence for the Assassins.

In 1503, on the recommendation of her brother, Claudia was officially inducted into the Assassin Brotherhood, receiving the traditional brand on her left finger and performing a leap of faith into the Tiber. She fought alongside her fellow Assassins in the final battles against Cesare Borgia and his troops, driving them from Rome.

Claudia retired as owner of the *Rosa in Fiore* after being assaulted by Borgia supporters in 1504, but continued in her capacity as an Assassin, acting as an advisor to her brother Ezio.

3 : D : 1
#D

FEDERICO & PETRUCCIO AUDITORE

Federico (1456 - 1476) and Petruccio (1463 - 1476) Auditore were two of the children of Assassin Giovanni Auditore, executed alongside their father in 1476 on false treason charges.

Federico was the eldest of the four Auditore children, and as such was the only one officially inducted into the Assassin Order before his father's death. Charming but lazy, he showed little aptitude for his father's banking work. He was close to his younger brother Ezio despite often teasing him, and apparently had begun teaching him Assassin skills, such as fighting and free-running, before his death.

Petruccio was seven years younger, making him the youngest Auditore. He was a sickly child, often bedridden, leading to him being taken out of school.

Both were arrested in 1476 by Florentine guardsmen under the command of Uberto Alberti, a Templar, because of their father's work as an Assassin. Despite Ezio's best efforts they were hanged the next day. Ezio gave them a proper burial and vowed to avenge their deaths.

3 : D : 1
#E

MARIO AUDITORE

Mario Auditore (1434 - 1500) was an Italian *condottiero* (mercenary) and ruler of the town of Monteriggioni. Secretly the leader of the Assassins, he was also responsible for training his nephew, Ezio Auditore.

Little is known of Mario's early life. At the age of six, he was present at the battle of Anghiari, where he played a small role by warning the *condottiero* Micheletto Attendolo of an approaching Milanese force. He spent much of his time in Monteriggioni, and when his brother Giovanni left for Florence in 1454, Mario became its sole ruler.

Shortly after this, a Florentine force under the command of Federico da Montefeltro attacked Monteriggioni, but Mario defeated it. A captured spy revealed that they had been sent to find an artefact hidden underneath the villa. Upon further investigation, Mario discovered a series of crypts, full of deadly traps. Several of Mario's men were injured or killed during these explorations, and Mario himself lost an eye. Deep in the catacombs he found a mysterious box. Realising that so-well hidden an item was probably dangerous, he took the box—which in fact contained a Piece of Eden, the Shroud—and gave it to his brother Giovanni for safe keeping.

Though Mario successfully kept Monteriggioni independent, he was a poor administrator and by the time Ezio arrived, in 1476, the town had fallen into disrepair. Ezio, along with his sister and mother, was seeking refuge after the execution of his brothers and father Giovanni, the result of a Templar conspiracy. Mario took Ezio under his wing, training him in the ways of the Assassins. In 1478 they worked together to kill Vieri de' Pazzi, one of the Templars responsible for Giovanni's death.

In 1488, Mario and several other Assassins went to Venice to recover an Apple of Eden from Rodrigo Borgia. When they found Borgia, he was locked in combat with Ezio, who was independently pursuing the artefact. After forcing Borgia to flee and reclaiming the Apple, Mario officially inducted Ezio into the Order.

Eleven years later, Mario, Ezio and the other Assassins went to Rome to deal with Borgia—now Pope Alexander VI—and find the Vault described in Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad's Codex. Mario caused chaos in the city while Ezio snuck into the Sistine Chapel to confront Borgia. Afterwards, Mario helped Ezio fight his way out of the city, and both men returned to Monteriggioni, arriving on 1 January 1500. The next day, the papal army, under the command of Rodrigo Borgia's son, Cesare, besieged Monteriggioni. During the battle, Mario was injured and captured. He was then executed by Cesare in full view of his nephew.

3 : D : 1
#F

DOMENICO AUDITORE

Domenico Auditore was an Assassin and the great-great-grandfather of Ezio Auditore. He was also the founder of the Auditore family.

Domenico was born to humble station, making a living with his father as a sailor under the patronage of Marco Polo in Venice. During this time he married and had one son. One day, Domenico was called by his patron to a meeting, where he was met by his father and a mysterious cloaked figure. His father revealed that he was descended from the ancient Assassin Brotherhood and that the other man—Dante Alighieri—would act as his master and tutor in their ways. In return, Domenico would travel with Dante to Spain.

Under Dante's tutelage Domenico learned much, including of the Templars and their attempts to control humanity through states and governments. In 1321, before they could set off to Spain, Dante suddenly died and Domenico returned to his father and his patron. Marco Polo then told him the terrible truth: Dante had been murdered by the Templars. It was now up to Domenico to take up Dante's charge—the protection of Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad's Codex—and head on to Spain. Polo granted him access to his bank accounts and, gathering his wife and son, Domenico took to the sea.

They would not reach their destination unhindered. While stopped in Otranto, pirates in the employ of the Templars boarded his ship and tried to force Domenico to give up the Codex, but he protected it by breaking it to pieces and hiding it in several crates. Angered and drunk, the pirates raped Domenico's wife and tossed the entire family overboard.

Domenico and his son survived, washing up on the Italian shore, but his wife did not. Domenico hid his son in Florence before returning to Venice to seek out his father and patron, but they too had been killed by the Templars. Domenico still had access to Polo's funds however, and he used these to build a new life. Taking up lessons in architecture, the classics and elocution, he began to masquerade as a Florentine nobleman, taking the family name Auditore.

He eventually bought and renovated the Villa Auditore in Monteriggioni, which would act as a base for the Italian Assassins until its destruction in 1500. His descendants would continue the fight against the Templars for generations to come.

3 : D : 1
#G

SOFIA SARTOR

Sofia Sartor (1473 - unknown) spent the earliest years of her life in Constantinople's Venetian quarter. In 1498, she fled to Italy with her parents on the eve of the Ottoman-Venetian War, and did not return until 1507, long after the conflict had quieted. Once resettled, Sofia returned to the bookshop previously run by her father in the *Hagia Sophia* District, becoming its sole proprietor. Unbeknownst to her, this shop sat on the ruins of a trading post once owned and operated by the brothers Niccolo and Maffeo Polo—the two men responsible for spreading the Assassin's Creed westward, to Italy and beyond—over 250 years earlier. A mature and hard-working woman, Sofia loved engaging with anyone she considered her intellectual equal. She had no patience for casual banter while conducting business, but her intelligence and sense of humor always outweighed any perceived coldness.

Sofia met Ezio Auditore in early 1511, and though the two grew very close in a short time, she remained unaware of his connection to the Assassins, and ignorant of the nature of the Templar threat in the city, for quite some time. Ezio's discovery of one of the Masyaf library keys below her shop piqued her

interest. When he asked her to help him find the remaining keys hidden in secret locations throughout the city, she did so out of sheer intellectual curiosity, tackling the project with all the enthusiasm and glee of an amateur archeologist.

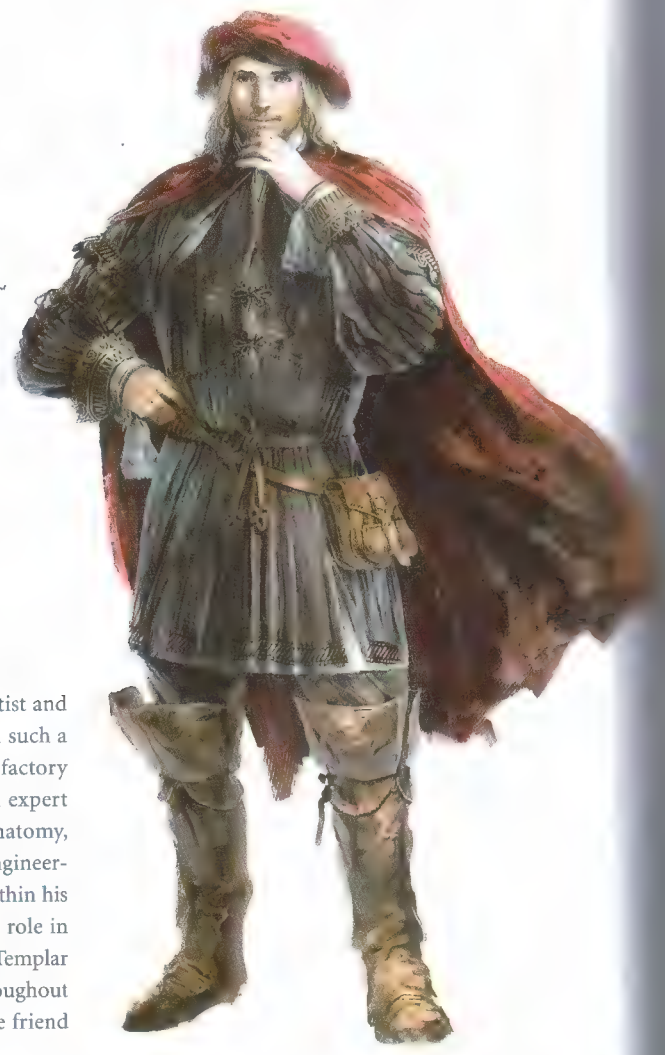
Polylingual, and with a deep knowledge of ancient scripts and ciphers, Sofia proved to be the perfect companion to help Ezio decode the clues inscribed on an ancient map left behind by the Polo brothers. Having lived a life of tireless devotion to her father's legacy, the allure of a treasure hunt with a mysterious and handsome Italian brought a much-needed spark of intellectual challenge and excitement to her life.

In spite of Ezio's best efforts to keep his friendship with Sofia separate from his activities with the Brotherhood—knowing she would abhor the violence inherent to his line of work—his enemies eventually spoiled this secret, ultimately ensnaring Sofia in the centuries-old conflict between Assassins and Templars. Regardless of this danger, Sofia's respect for Ezio remained strong, and their friendship quickly blossomed into a romance.

The two returned to Italy shortly after the events in Constantinople and they were wedded in Florence, where they spent the rest of their lives together, deeply in love, and raising their two children: Flavia and Marcello.

3 : D : 1
#H

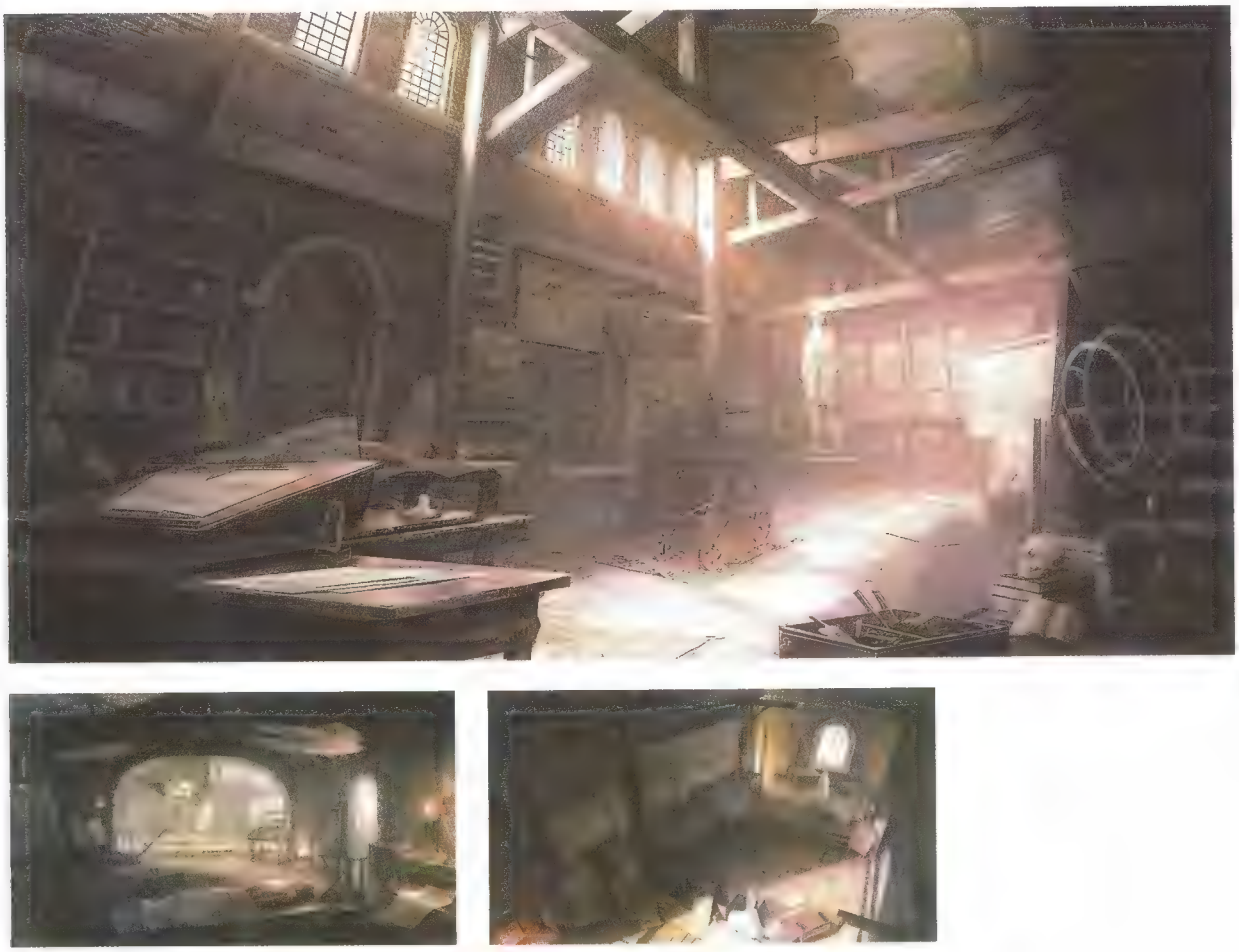
LEONARDO DA VINCI



Leonardo da Vinci (1452 - 1519) was an artist and scientist of the Italian Renaissance, though such a basic description seems somewhat unsatisfactory given the breadth of his talent. He was an expert in nearly every field known at the time: anatomy, sculpture, cartography, painting, botany, engineering, architecture and mathematics all fell within his ken. Furthermore, he played an important role in the struggle between the Assassins and the Templar Order which raged across his homeland throughout his lifetime, all the while remaining a close friend and ally to assassin Ezio Auditore.

Born out of wedlock to a notary and his peasant mistress, Leonardo grew up in the small Tuscan town of Vinci, within the territory administered by the Republic of Florence. Little is known of his early life, but in 1466 he was apprenticed to the famed Florentine artist Verrocchio. Leonardo excelled under his new master's tutelage; it was said that Verrocchio was so shamed by his pupil's skill with the brush that he resolved to never paint again. By the age of 20, Leonardo had qualified as a master and set up his own workshop, eventually receiving a series of commissions from the Auditore family. It was when handing over some of these, in 1476, that he first encountered Ezio Auditore. Their friendship would be sealed when Ezio, fleeing the Florentine authorities after the killing of his family, approached Leonardo and requested his help to repair his father's hidden blade. Fascinated by the contraption, Leonardo fixed the weapon, which was almost immediately put to use when Ezio saved his friend from an aggressive guardsman.

Records of Leonardo's activities—and even his whereabouts—are somewhat spotty for the next few years. He continued to paint, receiving two important commissions, neither of which he managed to finish; a character trait that often marked his artistic work, perhaps in part caused by his regular secret activity for the Assassins. In 1478, he was again contacted by Ezio, who sought to use Leonardo's code-breaking skills to decipher pages from Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad's centuries-old Codex. From then on



› LEONARDO'S WORKSHOP

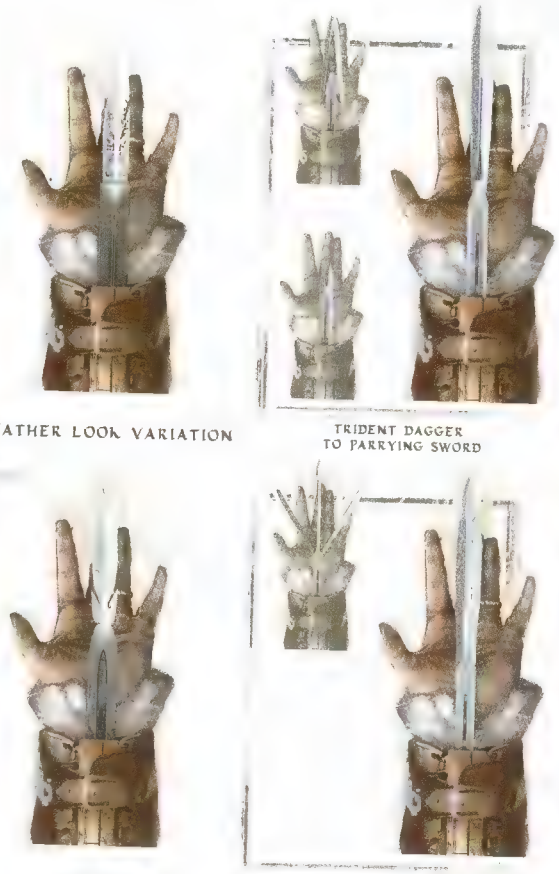
Ezio visited Leonardo when he discovered new pages from the Codex, the instructions contained within allowing Leonardo to construct a range of useful inventions for Ezio, including a poisoned blade and a hidden pistol. Two years later, he encountered Ezio on the road across the Apennines to Venice, and Leonardo would stay in that city for some time. It was here that he first tested a flying machine, which Ezio used in order to infiltrate the Palazzo Ducale and assassinate Carlo Grimaldi.

In 1482, Leonardo found employment with the Duke of Milan, Ludovico il Moro. While in Milan, he pursued several artistic projects (such as his religious masterpiece *The Last Supper*) and scientific research, which included was the famous anatomical sketch *The Vitruvian Man*. He also worked on an enormous equestrian statue for the Duke, known as the *Gran Cavallo*, though, again, it was never finished. Leonardo's inability to complete most of his projects can perhaps be explained by the fact that he was making regular trips to Venice, and later to the Auditore stronghold of Monteriggioni, in order to help the Assassins in their ongoing struggle with the Templars. Also during this time he began to take an interest in the Hermeticist cult of Pythagoras, making a map of the location of their temple in invisible ink on some of the paintings in the Villa Auditore.

After French forces invaded Milan in 1499, triggering the Second Italian War, Leonardo ended up in the hands of Cesare Borgia, son of Templar Grand Master and pope Alexander VI, who forced him to construct a series of deadly war machines—

HIDDEN BLADE

MECHANIC VARIATION



> AN OLDER LEONARDO

including a tank, an aerial bomber, a naval cannon and a machine gun— as well as arming the Borgias' elite forces with pistols. Despite this, Leonardo was able to maintain contact with Cesare's enemies, the Assassins, who were organising their resistance against the Borgias in Rome. Leonardo continued to provide his friend Ezio with technology (such as parachutes and a poison dart launcher), and leaked to him the locations of the war machines he had been forced to build, so that they could be destroyed. Of a pacific nature—he was a vegetarian who apparently often bought caged birds just in order to set them free—it seems that Leonardo could not bear to think of his creations being used to cause harm.

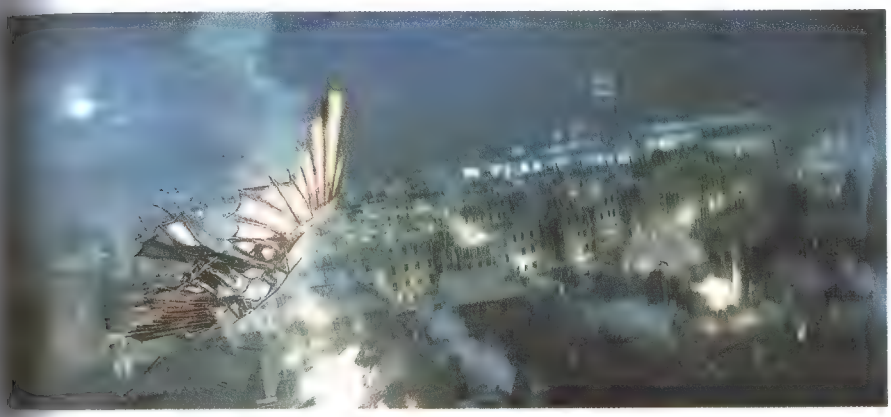
In 1502, Leonardo was tasked to create a bridge design which would allow for passage over the Golden Horn, an estuary which divided the city of Constantinople. While a drawing was presented to Sultan Bayezid II as part of a civil engineering project, it was never executed.

After the downfall of the Borgia in 1503, Leonardo returned to Florence. The following year, assassin Niccolo Machiavelli arranged a commission for him to paint a fresco of the Battle of Anghiari for the city in a joint project with fellow artist Michelangelo—Leonardo remained true to form and never finished it. While in Florence, he also may have designed the uniforms for Machiavelli's new Florentine militia.

By 1506, Leonardo was back in Rome to pursue his interest in the Hermeticists and their search for the temple of Pythagoras. Unfortunately for Leonardo, his research drew the attention of the modern descendants of the cult, who kidnapped him from his workshop in order to gain his help to claim the temple for themselves. He was rescued by Ezio who, along with Leonardo's assistant (and possible lover) Salai, had followed the clues left by Leonardo in his paintings in order to find the temple. Ezio and Leonardo explored the temple's interior, but found nothing that they could explain or understand.

In his later years, Leonardo continued to travel through Italy, pursuing his usual interests. In December 1515, he created for King Francis I of France a walking mechanical lion that sat down and opened its chest to reveal a lily, the symbol of the French monarchy. So impressed was King Francis that he hired Leonardo as his personal artist. For the last three years of his life, Leonardo lived in France under the patronage of the king, to whom he became a close friend and father figure. In early 1519, he finished what would arguably become the most famous painting of all time, the *Mona Lisa*. It was one of the last works he ever completed. At the age of 67, Leonardo died, according to some while being cradled in the arms of the king himself.

Leonardo da Vinci's genius cannot be understated. Perhaps no man in all of human history has had a mind which wandered so widely and with such results. It can be argued that Leonardo's contribution to the cause of the Assassins was of equal importance; his vast knowledge and unequalled technical expertise were crucial for the organization in their fight against the Templars in Renaissance Italy.



3 : D : 1
#1

CATERINA SFORZA

Caterina Sforza (1463 - 1509) was an Italian noblewoman who held the title of Duchess of Forlì from 1484 until her death in 1509, although in her later years she had lost hold of the city itself. She was an ally of the Assassin Order, having a particularly close relationship with Ezio Auditore, who would later become leader of the Order.

Caterina was the descendant of the famous Sforza dynasty of *condotierri* (mercenaries), who had managed to gain the title of Dukes of Milan in the early 15th century. Sforza is derived from the Italian *sforzare,* "to force", and Caterina would certainly live up to the name. Her father, Galeazzo Maria, was the second Sforza Duke of Milan and her mother, Lucrezia Landriani, one of his mistresses. Despite her illegitimacy, Caterina lived her early years in relative luxury and received an excellent humanist education. At the time, girls as well as boys were often taught the ways of both war and government. Caterina was given a particularly thorough education on the martial traditions of her mercenary ancestors. She would put it to good use.

At the age of ten, Caterina was betrothed to the thirty-year-old Girolamo Riario, rumored to be the son of Pope Sixtus IV. Sixtus certainly treated him well, granting Girolamo and his new wife the fiefdom of Imola in 1477, though they remained based in Rome. Caterina settled into the life of a Roman aristocrat, moving around the various courts of Rome with ease. She had her first child in 1478, and over the next nine years would produce five more. During their time in Rome, they often hosted Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, a powerful Spanish political figure and leading Templar. It is unknown whether Girolamo was a member of the Templar Order at this point, or whether he was recruited by Borgia while in Rome.

In 1480, Girolamo and Caterina were granted control of the city of Forlì. While the couple remained based in Rome, Girolamo made several visits to the city in an attempt to gain its loyalty. During one of these early trips to Forlì, Caterina, allegedly bored with her husband, slipped away and found herself in a precarious situation. She was rescued by Ezio Auditore. The two flirted briefly before Ezio continued on his journey.

In 1484, the lives of Girolamo and Caterina were shaken by the death of Girolamo's patron, Pope Sixtus. Caterina, though seven months pregnant, rode with sword in hand to hold the strategically important *Castel Sant'Angelo* on her husband's behalf, but it was not enough. The couple was unable to influence the next papal election and were forced out of Roman political life, retreating to rule over Forlì.

Girolamo continued working for the Templars. By 1488, he was helping them create a map detailing the locations of the pages of Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad's Codex. However, Caterina had by this point made contact with the Assassins, and Girolamo's Templar activities—as well as his inability to satisfy Caterina in bed or act as a good father to her children—caused her to hire the Orsi brothers to assassinate him. This they did, but the plan backfired; the Orsi brothers were Templar agents working for Rodrigo Borgia, who wanted to take control of the city as well as seize Girolamo's map.

Meanwhile Ezio, along with Niccolò Machiavelli, arrived in Forlì, seeking to find a safe place to store the Apple of Eden which they had retrieved from Rodrigo Borgia. Ezio, Caterina and Machiavelli fought their way to the Rocco di Ravaldino, the town's main citadel. Though they captured the fortress, the Orsi brothers managed to take two of Caterina's children hostage. A stand-off ensued, as the Orsis demanded the Apple in return for the children. At this point Caterina stood on the battlements, raised her skirts and shouted, "I have the instrument to make more!" This was merely a bluff, for Caterina had secretly sent Ezio out to rescue her children while she protected the Apple. Though Ezio was successful, slaying Ludovico Orsi, Checco Orsi and his forces stormed the castle and seized the Apple. Ezio set off after Checco while Caterina remained in the city and punished any who had helped the Orsis, executing them, confiscating their wealth and giving it to the poor.

For eleven years, Caterina reigned over the city. She remarried twice, though neither man survived very long. In 1494, Caterina was put in a difficult situation when the armies of Charles VIII, King of France, sought passage across her lands in order to pursue his claim to Naples. By expertly playing both sides Caterina was able to get through the crisis without alienating either Pope Alexander VI (her old acquaintance Rodrigo Borgia), who opposed Charles, or her uncle, Duke Ludovico of Milan, who supported him. In 1498, Caterina outfought the armies of Venice in a series of actions that earned her the nickname "The Tiger of Forlì". She proved to be a skilled politician and warrior.

In 1500, Caterina visited Ezio in Monteriggioni, seeking the help of his mercenaries for the defense of Forlì. She spent the night with him, though she later claimed this was for political reasons. The next morning, the town was attacked by the forces of Cesare Borgia, who captured Caterina and took her back to Rome. Accused of attempting to murder Pope Alexander VI with a poisoned letter, Caterina was held prisoner in the *Castel sant'Angelo*. History has never discovered the veracity of these accusations, though Machiavelli wrote that he believed them to be true, and they do not seem unlikely, given her relationship with the Templars. Caterina did not face a tribunal, however, as Ezio broke into the Castel and freed her. Shortly afterward, she left Rome to look after her children. Caterina took up residence in Florence, from where she made several petitions to Alexander VI's successor, Julius II, for the return of her fiefdom. Despite the Pope's sympathy, her wish was never granted. She died of pneumonia on 28 May 1509.

"If I were to write the story of my life, I would shock the world", Caterina was reported saying in her later years. A woman in a world ruled primarily by men, Caterina Sforza nonetheless managed to remain a major player in Italian politics throughout much of her lifetime. Though she was a ruthless politician, she was a caring mother, and her stand against the Borgias marked her out as a woman of bravery and principle.

3 : D : 1
#J

NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI

Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli (1469 - 1527) was a Florentine politician and philosopher, as well as a member of the Assassin Brotherhood.

Machiavelli was born in Florence to a relatively wealthy family, but his early life was by no means easy. Though trained as a lawyer, his father had inherited debts that prevented him from joining the legal guild and thus could not practice his trade officially. Instead, he was forced to eke a living out of the proceeds of a small estate outside the city. Nonetheless, he gradually built a library full of classical works and young Niccolò grew up in a rich intellectual atmosphere.

By his 19th birthday, Niccolò had been inducted into the Assassin Brotherhood. His first recorded appearance in this capacity occurred in 1488 when he, along with Mario Auditore and several others, sought to retrieve one of the Apples of Eden from Templar Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia in Venice. There they encountered Mario's nephew, Ezio Auditore, who had been pursuing a private vendetta against Borgia. Though the cardinal escaped, the Apple was recovered, and Machiavelli and the other Assassins inducted Ezio into the Brotherhood.

Niccolò then traveled with Ezio to Forlì, hoping to place the Apple under the protection of Countess Caterina Sforza, an ally of the Assassins. The Templars got there first, however, and Ezio and Machiavelli, alongside Caterina, had to fight them off. In the struggle they lost the Apple to Girolamo Savonarola.

In 1497, Machiavelli and Ezio tracked down Savonarola to Florence. Using the Apple, Savonarola had seized control of the city. Ezio and Machiavelli came up with a plan to topple Savonarola: Ezio would assassinate the monk's lieutenants while Machiavelli rallied resistance. Machiavelli took advantage of the chaotic aftermath of these events to get himself onto the city's leading executive body, the Ten of War. He was also appointed Second Chancellor of the Republic and was eventually sent on several diplomatic missions.

Despite his new responsibilities, Machiavelli continued to work alongside the Assassins, helping Ezio recover the Apple from Rodrigo Borgia (now Pope Alexander VI) in Rome in 1499. After the Assassins returned to Monteriggioni to discuss the aftermath of this mission, Machiavelli was shocked to learn that Ezio had not killed Borgia. This would be but the first of several disagreements between the two men. Machiavelli immediately returned to Rome to deal with Borgia once and for all.

Machiavelli was fortunate—too fortunate, according to some. A day after he left Monteriggioni, Cesare Borgia, Rodrigo's son, besieged the town. Mario Auditore was killed and Ezio seriously wounded, but

Machiavelli returned in time to pick up the injured Assassin on the road to Rome, though Ezio would not discover his savior's identity for some time. Following Mario's death, Machiavelli became *de facto* leader of the Italian Assassins. He and Ezio began to work against the Borgias from a secret base on Tiber Island in Rome.

His ongoing diplomatic work for Florence eventually led Machiavelli to meet Cesare Borgia, whom he first encountered face-to-face in Urbino in 1502. Though this allowed him to keep an eye on Cesare, his association with him roused suspicions among his fellow Assassins, particularly with the thief known as La Volpe. This was perhaps with good reason—Machiavelli was certainly impressed by Cesare's pragmatism and political skill, and wrote several admiring accounts of how he dealt with rebellious commanders and provinces over the course of 1502-1503. Machiavelli would later be proven innocent of any wrongdoing, however, and would remain a valuable ally in battling the Templars.

Machiavelli officially handed over leadership of the Brotherhood to Ezio in 1503, granting him the title of Mentor. At this point he also revealed that he had secretly helped Ezio on several occasions, despite often disagreeing with his actions. Machiavelli would remain second in command of the Order, acting as Ezio's most trusted advisor.

Little is known of Machiavelli's work with the Assassins after the fall of the Borgias. He returned to Florence where, between 1503 and 1506, he worked on training a citizen militia to protect the city in the ongoing Italian Wars. It was not enough to maintain the city's freedom, however, and in 1512 Florence was invaded by Spanish forces and returned to the Medici. The Medici took umbrage at Machiavelli's role in the city during their absence, and had him arrested, tortured and exiled.

For the rest of his life, Machiavelli lived a lonely existence just outside Florence. He sought to ingratiate himself with the Medici and find a way to return to his former prominence by writing works and dedicating them to members of the family. The most famous of these was *The Prince*. In it, Machiavelli proposed a model for how to take and keep power in the political bear pit that was Renaissance Italy. His other works, particularly his *Discourses on Livy*, showed a fondness for republican government and a strong belief in liberty. He seemed to believe that often violent action must be taken to preserve freedoms; indeed, this may be what originally attracted him to the Assassin Brotherhood. His belief in the usefulness of autocratic and unscrupulous methods of government, however, makes it obvious why some Assassins suspected him of sympathizing with the Templars.

In 1523, Giuliano de' Medici commissioned Machiavelli to write a history of Florence, but he would never get to return to Florentine political life, dying just months after the city had again ejected the Medici and returned to a republican model of government.

Still a controversial figure today, Machiavelli's role as a politician and an Assassin was an ambiguous one, yet his importance as a thinker as well as man of action is undeniable.

3:D:1
#K

GILBERTO (LA VOLPE)

La Volpe ("The Fox") was the leader of the Florentine Thieves Guild and a member of the Assassin Brotherhood. Known as Gilberto to his closest associates, La Volpe was virtually a legend in Florence, believed to be a master thief with supernatural abilities capable of accomplishing impossible tasks. It was rumored that his eyes were purple and enabled him to see through walls, and that he once robbed the Pope in his own carriage without alerting his guards. In 1467, he was reportedly seen simultaneously atop the Basilica di Santa Croce, the Palazzo Medici and the Palazzo della Signoria.

La Volpe crafted his reputation with care. He possessed no supernatural abilities, but commanded a sophisticated intelligence network. Expert in gathering information and dealing in rumors, La Volpe committed his resources to the Assassin Brotherhood. His activities for the Brotherhood included spying on Templar Rodrigo Borgia. In 1478, he uncovered a plot to murder the Medici family, which would strengthen Templar control over Florence. La Volpe caught wind of the conspiracy early enough to alert Ezio Auditore. With La Volpe's help, Ezio infiltrated the group and saved Lorenzo de' Medici.

Unknown to Ezio, La Volpe was training him to become a member of the Assassin Brotherhood and he guided him toward Rodrigo Borgia in order to sharpen his skills. La Volpe's efforts came to fruition in 1488. After a decade of observation and subtle mentorship, La Volpe was among the Assassins who presided over Ezio's initiation into the Brotherhood.

La Volpe's actions demonstrate his *modus operandi*. He preferred subtlety over force, acting through instruction and guidance. Consequently, he took an active role in Assassin strategy, acting as a catalyst rather than striking on his own. He once again demonstrated his talent for manipulation in 1497, when he helped instigate a popular uprising against Girolamo Savonarola, who believed that the intellectual and cultural advances of the Renaissance era were

corrupting society. In an effort to return society to a state of medievalist purity, Savonarola seized control of Florence by using an Apple of Eden. With the assistance of fellow Assassin Niccolò Machiavelli, La Volpe led an angry mob against the priest. The mob cornered Savonarola at the Palazzo della Signoria and put him to death. La Volpe's involvement in the removal of Savonarola was one of his last services to Florence.

In 1500, La Volpe moved to Rome and quickly setup a new network of thieves, spies and informants to oppose the Borgias, who were firmly in control of the city. Operating in an area largely under Templar control, La Volpe became more protective of the fragmented Brotherhood, which had recently lost its headquarters in Monteriggioni. He also became suspicious of the *de facto* Assassin leader, Niccolò Machiavelli. As the Brotherhood began to replenish its numbers in Rome, La Volpe did likewise. He turned his base of operations into an inn, *La Volpe Addormentata* ("The Sleeping Fox"), which served as a front for his guild as well as an occasional meeting place for the Brotherhood.

The year 1500 was a tumultuous one for La Volpe and his associates. More than once, his network was compromised from without as well as from within. His guild became embroiled in conflict with a rival faction known as the *Cento Occhi* ("Hundred Eyes"), a newly formed Roman gang in the service of the Borgia family. To make matters worse, one of La Volpe's informants—an Assassin named Paganino—revealed himself to be a Templar agent. Paganino had been supplying the Borgias with intelligence on the activities and whereabouts of La Volpe's thieves, placing them all in danger.

It was only after eliminating Paganino that La Volpe realized his error in judgment towards Machiavelli, and thereafter he no longer showed any sign of mistrust toward him. With his guild firmly established in Rome, he once again faded into the background of the Brotherhood, sharing his wealth of resources and mobilizing his thieves when necessary.

La Volpe's penchant for subtlety and indirect action suggests he preferred anonymity, but the legends surrounding him persisted, even in Rome. One particular account recalls a violet-eyed man who infiltrated one of the infamous papal orgies of the Vatican, and left the cardinals bereft of everything but their bibles.

3 : D : 1
#L

BARTOLOMEO D'ALVIANO

Bartolomeo d'Alviano (1455 - 1515) was an Italian *condottiero* and member of the Assassin Brotherhood. Pantasilea Baglioni (1476 - unknown) was his wife and confidante, and aided him and the Assassins in their liberation of Rome from the Borgias.

From an early age, Bartolomeo lived a soldier's life, fighting initially in the employ of the Papal States. At some point he joined the Assassin Brotherhood, and by 1486 he and his mercenaries were fighting the forces of the Templar Silvio Barbarigo in Venice. Bartolomeo was captured by Barbarigo's troops, but Ezio Auditore rescued him. Bartolomeo then took up his favorite sword, which he called "Bianca", and the two of them stormed the *Arsenale* and eliminated Barbarigo.

Two years later, Bartolomeo and Ezio met again in Venice, when the Assassins gathered to reclaim the Apple of Eden from Templar Grand Master Rodrigo Borgia. Bartolomeo was among those present when Ezio officially joined the Order shortly afterwards. He would also be involved in the Assassins' second attempt on Borgia's life in 1499.

In 1496, Bartolomeo and his mercenaries entered the war against the Borgias, fighting alongside the Orsini family. He eventually married Pantasilea Baglioni and by 1500, the two of them had moved to Rome to continue the fight against the Templars.

Bartolomeo quickly found himself in difficulty, fighting Borgia troops on one side and their French allies, under the command of Octavian de Valois, on the other. When Ezio arrived in Rome and offered his aid to Bartolomeo, the mercenary's pride led him to insist that everything was well. Pantasilea, a more reasoned counterbalance to her husband's impulsive ways, knew better and gave Ezio a series of tasks that would relieve the pressure on Bartolomeo.

Sometime later, French troops captured Pantasilea in an attempt to force Bartolomeo to surrender. Bartolomeo accepted Ezio's plan to sneak into Octavian's fortress disguised as French soldiers. They were successful, saving Pantasilea and killing Octavian.

Following the fall of the Borgias, Bartolomeo continued his mercenary career, fighting in turn for the Orsini, the King of Spain, the city of Venice as well as the French. In 1509, he fought in the Battle of Agnadello, where the Shroud of Eden was hidden, and won the trust of its citizens. Bartolomeo died while besieging the city of Brescia. He was buried in the church of Santo Stefano in Venice.

3 : D : 1
#M

PAOLA

Paola (1438 - unknown) was a Florentine courtesan, brothel owner and member of the Assassin Brotherhood.

Paola and her sister Annetta lost their parents, both Assassins, at an early age, forcing them to live on the streets. At the age of 20, Paola was involved in a confrontation with a city guard that left the man dead and Paola under arrest. Fortunately, Giovanni Auditore, an Assassin, represented her in court and she was found innocent. Shortly afterwards, Paola set up a brothel, *La Rosa Colta* ("The Plucked Rose"), in order to help women. She was also inducted into the Brotherhood. Meanwhile, her sister became a servant to the Auditore family.

In 1476, following the arrest of Giovanni Auditore, Paola's sister brought Giovanni's wife Maria and two of his children, Ezio and Claudia, to *La Rosa Colta*. Paola took them in and taught Ezio how to blend with crowds like an Assassin.

Twelve years later, Paola was part of the group of Assassins that met in Venice to reclaim a Piece of Eden from Rodrigo Borgia. She would also help Ezio and Niccolò Machiavelli drive Girolamo Savonarola from Florence in 1497, and in 1499, would travel to Rome to help Ezio assassinate Rodrigo Borgia.

3 : D : 1
#N

TEODORA CONTANTO

Teodora Contanto (1450 - unknown) was a Venetian courtesan, brothel owner and member of the Assassin Brotherhood.

The daughter of jewelers, Teodora worked in the family shop until the age of seventeen, when she was caught having an affair with a married man. As punishment she was sent to a convent, where she remained for five years.

Teodora believed that divine love was only realizable through human love, so she made the unusual decision to start a brothel. Hiring only former nuns like herself for her new establishment, La *Rosa della Virtù* ("The Rose of Virtue"), she shocked the religious establishment but made good business. Her network of courtesans also attracted the attentions of the Assassins, who at some point inducted her into their Order.

In 1486, Teodora aided Ezio Auditore in his assassination of the Templar Marco Barbarigo, then Doge of Venice. She was also present at his first battle with Rodrigo Borgia and his induction into the Brotherhood in 1488. Furthermore, Teodora assisted Ezio in Rome when he fought Borgia a second time in 1499.

La Rosa della Virtù was burnt down in 1516 by a disgruntled bishop whose demands for free services had been rejected. What happened to Teodora is unknown.

3 : D : 1
#O

ANTONIO DE MAGIANIS

Antonio de Magianis (1443 - unknown) was an Assassin and leader of the Venetian Thieves' Guild.

From an early age, Antonio had ambitions of wealth, but as the son of a lowly cobbler and a maid, his opportunities were limited. As a result he turned to theft. Quickly making a name for himself, he became an Assassin and leader of the Venetian thieves. Under his leadership, they developed a strict moral code, only stealing from the rich.

In 1481, Antonio met Ezio Auditore and helped him destroy the Barbarigo family. He encountered Ezio again in 1488 when the Assassins gathered in Venice to reclaim a Piece of Eden from Rodrigo Borgia. Antonio was also present when Ezio formally joined the Order.

In 1491, Antonio introduced Ezio to Luis de Santángel, a Spanish Assassin in need of help, and then put him in contact with the Barcelona Thieves' Guild. In 1499, Antonio was in Monteriggioni as the Assassins planned their attack on the Vatican, and was among those causing distractions throughout Rome while Ezio fought Rodrigo Borgia.

3 : D : 1
#P

CRISTINA VESPUCCI

Cristina Vespucci (1459 - 1498) was a Florentine noblewoman renowned for her beauty and sought after by many a man as a result. One such suitor was Ezio Auditore. Though at first Cristina spurned him, her feelings changed once Ezio rescued her from Vieri de' Pazzi, and they began a relationship.

In 1476, their affair was interrupted when Ezio's father and brothers were executed. Cristina helped Ezio bury his kin, but afterwards Ezio was forced to flee the city. By 1478, Ezio had cleared his name, but Cristina was now betrothed to Manfredo Soderini, and their relationship could not be resumed.

Cristina encountered Ezio twice more, once in Venice in 1486 and again in Florence twelve years later. The last time they met, Ezio attempted to save her life, but failed. She died in his arms.

3 : D : 1
#0

ROSA

Rosa (1460 - unknown) was a member of the Venetian Thieves Guild.

The illegitimate daughter of a nobleman and a prostitute, Rosa lived on the streets of Venice most of her young life. At the age of 15, she tried to pickpocket a stranger, but was caught. This man was Antonio de Magianis, leader of the Venetian thieves, who took pity on her and decided to look after the young thief. Over time, Antonio would grow fond of Rosa, becoming something of a father figure to her.

By 1481, the Venetian thieves were in conflict with Templar Emilio Barbarigo. Rosa and a group of thieves attempted to infiltrate Emilio's palazzo, but Rosa was wounded in the attempt. She was rescued by Ezio Auditore, and eventually developed a close relationship with her savior.

Rosa would help Ezio on several occasions: she played a role in the assassination of Emilio Barbarigo and, in 1488, gave Ezio a shipping manifest that pointed towards Rodrigo Borgia and his Piece of Eden. Rosa took over the running of the *Rosa in Fiore*, a Roman brothel, after Ezio's sister Claudia stepped down as its madam in 1504.

3 : D : 1
#R

YUSUF TAZIM

Yusuf Tazim (c. 1465 - 1512), head of the Assass[illegible] in Constantinople, was an affable Turkish Assas[illegible] with a natural talent for espionage and stealth, and a wild approach to leadership and strategy. Garrulous and prone to fits of laughter and joy, he was nonetheless recognized as a deadly opponent by any who faced him. Yusuf was a man who loved his friends and frightened his enemies, and often spent half the day fighting and the other half spinning tall tales of his triumphs.

Despite his tendency to self-aggrandize in the most amusing way possible, Yusuf was a charismatic leader and kept the Ottoman Assassin's guild intact through daunting times as they executed their solemn duties—protecting the innocent from the powerful, and keeping a close watch on the Sultan's growing strength. But Yusuf's lack of experience with fighting the Templars in such large and determined numbers left the Ottoman Assassins with little time to adjust to this new threat. Despite their disadvantages, they quickly adapted to the tactics of an enemy who seemed to have appeared from nowhere.

When Ezio arrived in Constantinople in 1511, he was surprised to find Yusuf waiting for him at the docks, the latter having been warned far in advance of the Italian's arrival by his intricate network of spies

operating throughout the region. Yusuf greeted Ezio warmly and welcomed him to the Ottoman capitol, for he adored the city of his birth, seeing himself as its ambassador as well as its guardian.

What, for most, should have been an occasion for humility or reverence, coming face to face with a Mentor of Ezio's stature did nothing to dim Yusuf's self-confidence. On the contrary, he seemed to feed off the excitement of being in the presence of someone with such authority and wisdom, firm in the belief that he stood to gain as much wisdom as he gave. As such, he was not shy in the least when it came to teaching Ezio a few new tricks in exchange for the opportunity to fight alongside a leader of the Order—which amused and impressed Ezio greatly.

3 : D : 1
#S

PRINCE SULEIMAN

Eventually known as Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent in the West and Suleiman *Kanuni* ("The Lawgiver") to his fellow Turks, young Prince Suleiman (1494 - 1566) was just seventeen when he first met Ezio Auditore in 1511. A bright and serious young man with a preternatural confidence and an even-tempered manner, he was admired for his calm intelligence and reserved sense of humor, preferring subtle wit to blatant outrageousness.

Suleiman spent his early teens under the tutelage of various scholars, always intent on strengthening his mind and tempering his wisdom. Spurred on by the insurgent attacks plaguing the city and threatening the throne of his grandfather, he also took to the study of politics and warcraft, eager to help Sultan Bayezid II stabilize his Empire.

Ever curious to hear honest gossip and unvarnished political opinion, Suleiman developed a fondness early in his life for dressing in peasant garments and strolling about the markets and bazaars of every city he visited. It was during one of these clandestine outings that he came in contact with Assassin Ezio Auditore, on a galley ship sailing up the Bosphorous *en route* to Constantinople. After a proper introduction, the two men soon found common cause in their fight against the Byzantine Templars, first as allies of convenience, then as friends with a deep, mutual respect for one another.

Through Ezio's teaching, the ages-old war between the Assassins and the Templars passed from rumor into reality for Suleiman, and gave context to the recent influx of Byzantine soldiers into the city. But there was another conflict that troubled Suleiman more acutely—the bitter struggle for power between his father, Selim, and his uncle, Ahmet, which threatened to bring down the Empire from within. Suleiman's discomfort with this fight was further magnified when he uncovered scraps of evidence that someone close to his family was actively allied with the Byzantine Templars in their open war against the Empire.

Suleiman spent months seeking answers, only to find himself the target of a botched Byzantine assassination plot. It was then that he realized he could no longer trust anyone in his family or his immediate circle. Suleiman therefore turned to Ezio for aid, to help him track down the source of the Byzantine's leadership and flush out any traitors in their midst.

Nine years after contravening the Templars' designs on his grandfather's throne, Suleiman went on to become the tenth Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, ruling for nearly five decades. As a great patron of culture and civilization, he enacted a complete reform of the Ottoman legal system, overseeing widespread changes to the laws governing society, education, taxation and criminal justice, setting in place regulations which would survive for many centuries.

3 : D : 1
#T

PIRI REIS

Piri Reis (c. 1468 - c. 1555)—full name Hadji Ahmed Muhiddin Piri—*was an* Ottoman sea captain and cartographer.

In his mid-teens, Piri joined his uncle Kemal Reis, a Turkish pirate who operated on the edges of the Ottoman Empire Eventually both Piri and Kemal spun their criminal expertise into a proper vocation, joining Sultan Bayezid's navy at some point in the 1490s.

After having spent more than two decades at sea, Piri took a leave of absence to focus on his quieter passions; namely, cartography. It was a few years later that he first met Ezio Auditore. By then a master mapmaker with a small studio located inside the Grand Bazaar, he was—unknown to most—also a master Assassin who specialized in bomb crafting. Piri served as Ezio's main point of contact for learning the intricacies of bomb making during his stay in the city of Constantinople. Piri was an intelligent and witty, if slightly grumpy man who hated being interrupted in his work. However, he also understood that Ezio was a man who should be listened to, and thus acted accordingly.

3 : D : 1
#U

SHAO JUN

Shao Jun (1505 - unknown) was born in royal captivity during the Ming Dynasty of China under the lackluster rule of Emperor Zhengde, whose lavish lifestyle, childish disposition, and disinterest in the vagaries of politics were hallmarks of his reign. By the time Jun was in her teens, she had been living for almost a decade as one of the Emperor's preferred concubines, a position that might have been intolerable, were it not for Zhengde's fondness for travel and foreign company, which gave Jun the opportunity to see more of the world than most free men of the era. It seemed an ideal, if unfortunate compromise for a girl in Jun's situation.

In April of 1521, Emperor Zhengde died, and with no successor to take his place, royal ministers scrambled to find an heir. It was during this chaotic period that Jun came into contact with the Assassins. Taking advantage of the interregnum between the Emperor's death and the ascension of the next, a group of Assassins broke into the imperial palace and managed to free some of the concubines, Jun among them. Immediately loyal to her rescuers, Jun savored her first years of freedom and dedicated her life to serving the Brotherhood.

But Jun never forgot the women she had left behind, those with whom she had spent most of her life. When she and her mentor returned some years later to free the remaining concubines, they discovered that most had been killed, tortured to death by *Ling Chi* ("slow slicing" or death by a thousand cuts) at the order of the new Emperor Jiajing—likely as a direct consequence of Jun's own escape.

This new Emperor, it turned out, was exponentially worse than his predecessor. After the death of Zhengde, his nephew Zhu had stepped into his uncle's shoes. Called Jiajing, he shared all his uncle's worst qualities yet possessed none of his best. Where Zhengde had been charismatic, Jiajing was cruel; where Zhengde was curious, Jiajing was insular.

Enraged by the Assassins' meddling, Jiajing determined to hunt down all who opposed him, leading to the near elimination of the Assassin Order in Eastern China. With only a handful of survivors remaining, each group went deep into hiding. Most fled West with the hopes of finding surer footing. Jun and her mentor continued further still, traveling as far as Italy, hoping to recruit allies and gain wisdom from those who had fought tyranny and won.

They made it as far as Venice before Jiajing's servants caught up with them. In the ensuing fight, Jun's mentor was killed while assuring her escape. With renewed resolve, Jun traveled onward to Florence, finally locating the one she had been seeking: Ezio Auditore, an amiable man now in his mid-sixties, with his days as an Assassin far, far behind him.

THE BORGIAS & THEIR ALLIES

3 : D : 2
#A

RODRIGO BORGIA

Rodrigo Borgia (1431 - 1503) was a Spanish aristocrat who was both Grand Master of the Templar Order and an important figure in the Catholic Church, eventually becoming Pope under the name Alexander VI. He remains one of the most controversial figures in the history of the Church, and is to this day still associated purely with debauchery and corruption. Yet despite his reputation, Rodrigo was a skillful political operator who prospered in the chaotic power struggles of Renaissance Italy.

Born Rodrigo Llançol, he only took up his more familiar surname after his uncle Alonso de Borja was raised to the papacy as Calixtus III in 1455. His uncle, clearly appreciating the gesture, granted Rodrigo several choice appointments in the Church and within three years he had risen to the rank of Cardinal. Rodrigo set about accruing significant wealth and influence, but remained for several decades a largely shadowy background figure.

By 1476, Rodrigo had become Grand Master of the Templars and was putting together a plan to unite all of Italy under their banner. His first target was Milan, where he masterminded an attempt to assassinate Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza. Despite the intervention of Giovanni Auditore, a member of the Assassin Brotherhood, the duke was successfully eliminated. Rodrigo then turned to Florence where, in an alliance with the Templar Pazzi family, he sought to have Lorenzo de' Medici, Florence's ruler killed and replaced with someone more amenable to the Templars. When Giovanni Auditore again tried to interfere, Rodrigo engineered a plan to have him and his family arrested and executed for treason.

However Ezio Auditore, one of Giovanni's sons, evaded capture and swore to avenge his family. In his quest for revenge, Ezio successfully prevented the attempted coup. In retaliation, Rodrigo personally executed one of the conspiracy's ringleaders, Jacopo de' Pazzi, before setting off to Venice to oversee his final ploy, the replacement of the doge with another Templar, Marco Barbarigo. Again, Ezio interfered and thwarted his efforts.

Ever flexible, Rodrigo had other plans up his sleeve. For years he had been searching for an ancient artifact, the Apple of Eden. Sometime in the 1480s, Rodrigo discovered its location and sent a ship to fetch it and bring it to Venice, hoping to fulfill an ancient prophecy found in Altaïr's Codex. In 1488, the Apple arrived in the city. Yet just as he laid his hands on the artifact, Rodrigo was confronted, first by Ezio and then by the rest of the Assassins. Outnumbered, Rodrigo fled back to Rome, losing the Apple in the process.

In 1491, Rodrigo influenced Tomás de Torquemada, head of the Spanish Inquisition, to begin hunting down the Spanish Assassins. He also sought to halt Christoffa Corombo's plan to sail west, knowing that such a course would cause him to discover the Americas, whose treasures Rodrigo hoped to claim for himself. In both cases his plans were thwarted by Ezio.

Again failure did not disturb Rodrigo too much. He continued to deftly play politics, arranging several marriages for his daughter Lucrezia for political gain, and courting the various factions of Europe in return for favor. The culmination of this was when, in one of the most blatantly rigged elections in Papal history, Rodrigo was elected to the Papacy in 1492, taking the name Alexander VI. Rodrigo raised his eldest son, Juan Borgia the Younger, to the rank of Captain-General of the Papal army, seeking to use him to conquer Italy by force. However, in 1497, Juan was murdered on the orders of his own brother Cesare, who was jealous of his father's favorite son and wanted the position for himself. Rodrigo, apparently grief-stricken, declared that he would from then on seek only to reform the Church. He did not keep his promise for long and in 1498 Cesare received his brother's title. Using the papacy's funds—supplemented by the confiscated properties of cardinals and political enemies Rodrigo had poisoned—Cesare was sent out to conquer Italy.

Not only did Rodrigo's title grant him vast power, it also gave him access to the Papal Staff—in fact a Piece of Eden—and the Sistine Chapel, under which there lay a secret vault which he believed to contain some great power. All Rodrigo needed to gain entry was the Apple. He sent out several failed expeditions to retrieve it, initially from the Assassins in Forlì and then from Girolamo Savonarola in Florence. In 1499, the artifact was brought right to his doorstep by Ezio, who intended to end Rodrigo's ambitions once and for all. Rodrigo attempted to use the Papal Staff's power on Ezio, but the Assassin defended himself with the Apple and the two men dueled. Rodrigo temporarily gained the upper hand, injuring Ezio and seizing the Apple, but found himself unable to open the vault. Ezio and Rodrigo then fought again, and this time it was the Assassin who came out victorious. Rodrigo asked for death, disillusioned by his inability to claim the vault for himself, but Ezio chose to spare him.

His dreams of claiming the power of the vault shattered, Rodrigo's ambitions lessened and he resigned himself to simply maintaining his position, wanting nothing more to do with the Assassins. Yet despite his advancing years he continued to scandalize Rome with his behavior.

However, Rodrigo's son Cesare had inherited his father's earlier drive and with his control over the Papal army, he was able to pursue his goals without the Pope's support. In the process, Cesare leveled the Assassin stronghold at Monteriggioni, killed their leader Mario Auditore, reclaimed the Apple of Eden, and subjected much of Romagna to his rule. His increasingly autocratic behavior alienated many, and both dissident Italian lords and the Assassins soon struck back in force, dealing severe damage to the Borgias' hold over Rome.

In 1503, things were falling apart. Rodrigo's coffers were dry, his French allies were gone and the Assassins were closing in. Threatened and sidelined by his son's ambitions, Rodrigo decided to deal with Cesare using his favored method: poison, this time concealed in an apple. His plans, however, were revealed to Cesare by Lucrezia, just as Cesare bit into the poisoned fruit. Though weakened by the small amount of poison he had ingested, it was not enough to kill Cesare. In a rage, he shoved the rest of the apple down his father's throat. Within moments Rodrigo, at the age of 72, was dead.

3 : D : 2
#B

CESARE BORGIA

Cesare Borgia (c. 1475 - 1507) was the illegitimate son of Rodrigo Borgia and his mistress Vannozza dei Cattanei. As Captain-General of the Papal army under his father, Cesare conquered significant parts of Romagna and made himself a major player in Italian politics. The scion of a distinguished Templar dynasty—his father was Grand Master—Cesare was a great enemy of the Assassin Brotherhood.

Cesare's rise to power was remarkably fast. Thanks to his father's influence he was made Bishop of Pamplona at the tender age of 15 and just three years later he was granted a cardinal's hat, a decision that scandalized the Roman court. Yet this was not enough for Cesare, who craved a military position. However, it was Rodrigo's first son, Juan, who was granted the command of the Pope's forces upon his ascension to the Papal throne in 1492.

For five years Cesare waited. Eventually realizing that his brother was in his way, Cesare plotted to have him killed. Luring Juan to Tiber Island with courtesans, Cesare had one of his agents, Fiora Cavazza, murder him. The Pope was distraught, but with Juan dead he needed a new man to take up the Papal military banner. In 1498, Cesare became Captain-General of the Papal army and set out to conquer Northern Italy. At first he met with success; the petty despots of Romagna were weak and Cesare's promise to restore the rule of law appealed to the populace. Cesare attacked and destroyed the Assassin stronghold of Monteriggioni, killing their leader Mario Auditore and reclaiming the Apple of Eden lost by his father the previous year. Soon after, Forlì, Rimini, Faenza and Piombino fell to his armies.

By 1502, the people of Romagna began to chafe under their new ruler and his harsh methods of government. They rose in revolt. Cesare then carried out the first in what would be a brilliant series of political moves: he made a scapegoat of one of his commanders, Ramiro d'Orco, and had him executed, sating the people's anger. Thus Cesare quelled the insurrection while setting himself up as a defender of the people of Italy. With his position secure, his armies rolled onwards, taking Urbino and Camerino.

Fearful, Cesare's commanders rebelled against him, seizing some of his acquisitions. Cesare conceded to their demands and eventually offered the rebel

commanders re-entry into his service under excellent terms. The rebels accepted, and for a while all was quiet until Cesare invited Vitellozzo Vitelli and Oliverotto da Fermo to a banquet in their honor. Cesare had them seized and Micheletto Corella, his chief assassin and enforcer, strangled them while he watched. Cesare's audacious deception drew fearful admiration from many. Even Machiavelli wrote admiringly of Cesare's skill in dealing with the rebels.

Romagna was not the only place where Cesare tightened his control. Rome, the heart of his empire, also felt his authority. Borgia towers—a visible expression of Cesare's might—were erected throughout the city. These were supplemented by French troops led by Octavian de Valois. Cesare also brought into his employ a wide range of more subtle forces: the *Cento Occhi* ("Hundred Eyes") gang, a bevy of Templar assassins and spymasters, as well as expert propagandists.

Even his family life bore hallmarks of his autocratic control. When Cesare's sister Lucrezia grew a little too enamored with her second husband Alfonso of Aragon for his liking, he had Micheletto strangle him. Cesare also captured Leonardo da Vinci and exploited his genius as a military engineer to outfit his soldiers with modern firearms and create a series of war machines, hoping to use them in his conquest of Italy.

In 1500, however, the Assassins set up a base in Rome and gradually began to dismantle Cesare's apparatus of control. They attacked his financial backers, disrupted his alliance with the French, destroyed his war machines and eliminated most of his operatives in the city. In 1503, Cesare returned to Rome in order to ask for more support from his father; failing that, he would take and use the Apple of Eden. Instead the Pope, feeling threatened by his son and his claims to lead the Templar Order, tried to poison him. A timely warning from Lucrezia saved Cesare. In a rage, he attacked and killed his father.

However, Cesare had taken just enough poison to be seriously weakened, rendering him unable to prevent the Assassins from reclaiming the Apple of Eden and driving the remnants of his soldiers out of Rome. Even worse, he could not exert control over the next Papal election. On November 1, 1503, the Papal conclave elected Giuliano della Rovere, a staunch enemy of the Borgias, as Pope. Soon afterwards, Cesare was arrested and his lands confiscated. He briefly escaped confinement before being recaptured and moved to the *Castillo de la Mota* in the Kingdom of Aragon.

In 1506, Micheletto Corella arranged an escape, and together they fled to Valencia and began to gather a new army. Their preparations were disrupted by the arrival of Assassins Ezio Auditore and Niccolò Machiavelli, who together destroyed Cesare's encampment and ships. Cesare blamed Micheletto for the incident, and their argument turned violent. Cesare killed him and fled from the Assassins, crossing into the Kingdom of Navarre, which was then ruled by his brother-in-law John III.

In Navarre Cesare found employment in the army of King John, leading 10,000 men against Viana Castle. As his forces besieged the fortress in March 1507, Ezio Auditore confronted Cesare. The two fought on the battlements of the castle, and Cesare was thrown to his death.

› CESARE BORGIA

3 : D : 2
#C

LUCREZIA BORGIA

Lucrezia Borgia (1480 - 1519) was the illegitimate daughter of Templar Grand Master, Pope Alexander VI, and sister to Cesare Borgia. Though she was an intelligent woman—Lucrezia could speak five languages—she spent most of her life dominated and used by both her father and brother. We know very little of Lucrezia's true character, but she nevertheless played an important part in the events of 15th century Italy, if perhaps largely as a pawn in her family's plans.

Lucrezia's father wasted no time putting her to use in his political machinations. By the age of thirteen she had been betrothed twice, though neither engagement came to fruition. In 1493 she was married off to Giovanni Sforza, a powerful Milanese noble, but as the importance of the alliance with the Milanese diminished, Pope Alexander VI coerced Sforza to declare himself impotent, and annulled the marriage on grounds of non-consummation in 1497.

In 1498, Lucrezia embarked on an affair with Perotto Calderon, an Assassin masquerading as a courier in Borgia service. She became pregnant, thus exposing the couple. While it is unclear even today whether the child's father was her own brother Cesare or her lover Perotto, the latter fled with the boy in an attempt to save him when it was discovered he was gravely ill. Though he succeeded in helping the child, Perotto was killed by the Assassins for breaking their Creed, and the boy—Giovanni Borgia—was reclaimed by the Borgias.

Lucrezia later married Alfonso of Aragon. This second marriage did not last long either; in 1500, Cesare, jealous of his sister's new husband, had him killed by Micheletto Corella. Shortly afterward, during the siege of Monteriggioni, Lucrezia was given several Leonardo da Vinci paintings looted from the Villa Auditore. She then returned to Rome, where she took up residence in the *Castel sant'Angelo*. There she met Ezio Auditore, who neutralized her while rescuing Caterina Sforza from the fortress.

In 1502, Lucrezia was married to Alfonso d'Este, the Duke of Ferrara. The following year, after her father had died and her brother had fled Italy, she settled down with Alfonso in Ferrara. Despite several affairs and another encounter with Ezio, the remainder of Lucrezia's life was relatively uneventful. She died shortly after giving birth to her eighth child.

3 : D : 2
#D

GIOVANNI BORGIA

Giovanni Borgia (1498 - 1548), also known as the *Infans Romanus* ("Child of Rome"), was the child of Lucrezia Borgia. History does not agree on who Giovanni's father was, but rumors suggest that he was either the product of an illicit relationship between Lucrezia and Perotto Calderon or an incestuous affair between Lucrezia and her brother Cesare. A member of the Assassin Brotherhood, Giovanni was notable for having a peculiar connection to the Pieces of Eden.

Born severely malformed, Giovanni was expected to die within a few days. Driven by the desire to save the child, Perotto, an Assassin, broke out of prison and brought Giovanni to Agnadello. There, he defied his brother Assassins and used the Shroud of Eden—an artifact with mysterious healing capabilities—on Giovanni, knowing full well that he would die for his actions. Giovanni was saved, but contact with the Shroud would affect him for the rest of his life. As a child, he would suffer vivid dreams and hallucinations, reliving the memories of individuals from the past, including those of Marcus Junius Brutus. Giovanni also saw and communicated with a mysterious, invisible—and seemingly unreal—entity, whom he called Consus.

After Perotto's death at the hands of his former companions, Cesare Borgia adopted the child. With the help of Micheletto Corella, Cesare attempted to harden the boy, but Giovanni balked at their cruelty and grew to fear and hate both men. Meanwhile, he developed a strong bond with his "aunt" Lucrezia, who was sadden to see him raised in such a harsh environment. His grandfather, Rodrigo Borgia, would sometimes allow Giovanni to play with the Apple of Eden. With it, the boy was able to turn his thoughts into reality—an ability Rodrigo had never before seen.

Despite his affection for Lucrezia and Rodrigo, when Francesco Vecellio offered Giovanni the chance to leave the Borgias he gladly accepted. Francesco, a pupil of Perotto Calderon, thus trained him from an early age to become an Assassin. In 1519, masquerading as a chronicler and navigator, Giovanni took part of Hernán Cortés' voyage to the New World. In the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan, he retrieved a Crystal Skull—a Piece of Eden—and brought it back to Europe.

In 1527, Giovanni took the Crystal Skull to the scholar Bombastus von Hohenheim (better known as Paracelsus) in Basel. However, Bombastus dismissed the artifact's potential power, being far more interested in Giovanni's ability to read his "Book"—an item so dangerous that simply looking at it had driven one of his assistants mad. From a blank page of this Book, Giovanni was able to discern a formula that allowed Bombastus to turn silver into gold.

Giovanni suspected that Bombastus' Book could help him understand the properties of the Crystal Skull, but the scholar admitted that the volume was incomplete. He was however confident that Giovanni would find the answers he sought within the other half of the tome. With Maria Amiel, Bombastus' assistant, Giovanni set out on a quest that brought him to Paris, where he uncovered Nicolas Flamel's Grimoire, a translation of the missing part of Bombastus' Book. Unfortunately, Giovanni realized—thanks to his singular connection to the Pieces of Eden—that Flamel's translation was useless. When they returned to Basel, Giovanni and Maria learned that Bombastus had gone mad. They broke into his laboratory and stole his Book.

Giovanni eventually married Maria, with whom he had at least one child. He continued to study the Skull, staring into it for at least an hour every day for the next twenty years or so. His dedication paid off in 1542, when the artifact granted him a vision of a man in Chinese garb, holding a Skull of his own.

3 : D : 2
#E

UBERTO ALBERTI

Uberto Alberti (1416 - 1476) was a Florentine lawyer and statesman who sided with the Templars in their attempt to seize control of Florence in 1476.

Uberto was by profession a criminal lawyer, one of the best in Italy despite being entirely self-taught; he never lost a case. As a result, he was granted the prestigious post of *Gonfaloniere* of Florence. For many

years, Uberto was a close friend and ally of both Lorenzo de' Medici and Giovanni Auditore, but their friendship was severely strained when the Medici bank evicted Uberto's family from their home. When the Templars—offering Uberto land, money and power—asked him to betray his friends, he reluctantly accepted, claiming that he was doing so in order to protect his loved ones.

Uberto was tasked with keeping secret the Templars' plan to assassinate Lorenzo de' Medici and replace him with one of their own men. When Giovanni Auditore came close to uncovering the conspiracy, Uberto had him and two of his sons arrested on charges of treason. All three were sentenced to death and hanged the next day. Uberto's victory did not last long. Soon after the executions Ezio Auditore, Giovanni's last surviving son, killed him.

3 : D : 2
#F

OCTAVIAN DE VALOIS

Octavian de Valois (1448 - 1503) was a French nobleman, Baron of Valois and a member of the Templar Order. Though he had little in the way of military experience, Octavian's distant family connection to King Louis XII of France allowed him to take command of the expeditionary force sent from France to further the king's claims to Milan and Naples. In 1499 Octavian met Cesare Borgia and the two became allies. Octavian was present when Cesare attacked the Assassin stronghold of Monteriggioni in 1500, and was afterwards tasked with helping maintain Borgia control over Rome.

Between 1500 and 1503, Octavian's French troops spent much time locked in combat with Bartolomeo d'Alviano's mercenaries. Though Octavian's forces initially had the upper hand, Ezio Auditore's disruption of Borgia power in the area loosened the pressure on Bartolomeo and a stalemate ensued. In an attempt to resolve the situation Octavian seized Bartolomeo's wife Pantasilea, offering to free her in return for her husband's surrender. However, Bartolomeo and Ezio snuck into Octavian's camp with a band of mercenaries. In the chaos that followed, Octavian attempted to use Pantasilea as a human shield, but Ezio killed him.

3 : D : 2
#G

MICHELETTO CORELLA

Micheletto Corella (1470 - 1506) was a *condottiero*, a member of the Templar Order as well as Cesare Borgia's chief enforcer. He grew up in Rome alongside Cesare, becoming one of his most loyal assistants. He also occasionally acted as a guardian to Cesare's adopted son Giovanni, though the boy came to hate him for his cruelty.

In 1503, Micheletto attempted to kill Pietro Rossi, Lucrezia Borgia's lover, during a play at the Coliseum but Ezio Auditore prevented the murder.

Micheletto survived the fall and arrest of Cesare in 1503. Though briefly imprisoned and tortured by the Florentine authorities he escaped to Spain where he organised Cesare's breakout from the *Castillo de la Mota* in 1506. He helped Cesare gather an army in Valencia, but in 1506, the Assassins disrupted their plans. In a rage, Cesare blamed Micheletto for the setback, which prompted the *condottiero* to attempt to kill him. In the scuffle, Micheletto was overpowered and killed.

> JACOPO DE' PAZZI

3 : D : 3
#A

THE PAZZI FAMILY

The Pazzi were an aristocratic Tuscan family who gave up their noble titles in 1381 in order to participate in Florentine political life, becoming heavily involved in banking. They became associated with the Templars, and in 1478, led the plan to assassinate the Medici brothers, Lorenzo and Giuliano, to seize control of Florence, an event known in history as the Pazzi Conspiracy.

Jacopo de' Pazzi (1421 - 1480) was the head of the family and their banking business at the time of the conspiracy. He was somewhat old fashioned. and had actually petitioned to have his noble status restored. He was well-respected within the city and was charged with rallying the people to the Pazzi cause. Jacopo fled Florence after the failure of the coup and remained on the run the longest of the conspirators. However, he was killed by Templar Grand Master Rodrigo Borgia as punishment for his failure. His body would later be dug up and desecrated by a mob, who believed the burial of such a sinner on their land was responsible for a spate of bad weather.

Francesco de' Pazzi (1444 - 1478) was Jacopo's nephew and the main driving force behind family's involvement in the conspiracy. Proud of his family's noble roots, Francesco was embittered

about the power of the up-and-coming Medici family. Though he was arrested briefly, thanks to the work of Assassin Giovanni Auditore, he was freed after Giovanni's execution and tasked with killing Lorenzo de' Medici's brother, Giuliano. In this he was successful. Francesco then attempted to seize the *Palazzo della Signoria* in the name of the conspirators, but he was killed by Ezio Auditore and hanged from the building's roof.

Vieri de' Pazzi (1459 - 1478) was Francesco's son and one of the youngest Pazzi conspirators. Highly competitive, he developed a particularly vicious rivalry with Ezio Auditore during their teenage years. This rivalry eventually escalated to a failed attempt to kill Ezio as he fled to Monteriggioni in 1476 after the Templars had his father and brothers executed. Vieri was killed in San Gimignano by Ezio and a force of mercenaries under the command of Mario Auditore.

› FRANCESCO DE' PAZZI

3 : D : 3
#B

THE PAZZI CONSPIRATORS

The Pazzi Conspirators were a group of Templar-associated individuals who were involved, alongside the Pazzi family, in a 1478 attempt to murder Florentine leader Lorenzo de' Medici and his brother, Guiliano.

Francesco Salviati Riario (1443 - 1479) was from a moderately distinguished Florentine family and had hoped to become Archbishop of the city. When the position instead went to Lorenzo's brother-in-law the Pope granted Francesco the bishopric of Pisa instead, without consulting the Medici. Lorenzo, irritated by this, refused to allow Francesco to take up his seat. It was this that led to Francesco joining the conspiracy. He was meant to capture the *Palazzo della Signoria* for the conspirators, but this failed when his mercenaries managed to lock themselves in a side room. Shedding his bishop's robes, Francesco was able to escape to his villa in Tuscany but was later found and killed by Ezio Auditore.

Bernardo di Bandino Baroncelli (1453 - 1480), one of the Pazzi's bankers, became involved in the conspiracy as a way to gain vengeance for the exile of his cousins by the Medici. Afterwards he escaped the city, hoping to reach Constantinople, but was intercepted in San Gimignano by Ezio Auditore. He was brought back to Florence and hanged.

Stefano da Bagnone (1418 - 1479) was a monk and one of the few non-Pazzi family members involved in the plot who was an actual Templar, having been trained in the ways of murder by the Order in Rome. He was one of two holy men recruited to the conspiracy after Battista Montesecco, a mercenary who had been an early but rather unenthusiastic participant, refused to commit murder in chapel. After the plan's failure Stefano sought sanctuary in the Monte Oliveto Maggiore monastery in Tuscany, but like his fellow conspirators he was tracked down by Ezio and killed.

The final conspirator was Antonio Maffei (1450 - 1478), another monk. Blaming the Medici for the sacking of his hometown of Volterra by Florentine mercenaries, he decided to aid the Templars, helping *Gonfaloniere* of Florence Uberto Alberti interfere with Assassin Giovanni Auditore's attempts to investigate their plans. However, like Stefano he only became fully involved in the conspiracy after Montesecco's resignation. Its failure drove him mad; Antonio was found by Ezio shouting sermons from the top of San Gimignano's tallest tower, and silenced.

3 : D : 4
#A

THE VENETIAN CONSPIRATORS

The Venetian Conspirators were a group of Templars involved in Rodrigo Borgia's plan to murder the 72nd Doge of Venice, Giovanni Mocenigo, and take over the city.

Emilio Barbarigo (1421 - 1485) was a Venetian merchant and noble. He combined mercantile skill with his family's connections to great success, and by 1485 held almost total control over the Venetian merchant's district, bankrolling most of the city guard. Emilio came into conflict with the city's Thieves' Guild, which made at least one attempt upon his life, but his well defended *palazzo* thwarted them. His defenses were eventually breached by an alliance of the thieves with the Assassin Ezio Auditore, and Emilio was killed.

Carlo Grimaldi (1445 - 1485) was a member of the Venetian governing body, the Council of Ten. He rose to this position through loyal service to the Contarini family. He then ostensibly became a close friend to the Doge, and would use this friendship to deliver a deadly dose of poison to Mocenigo during a game of chess in the *Palazzo Ducale*, though shortly afterwards he himself was killed by Ezio.

Marco Barbarigo (1413 - 1486) was the Templars' intended candidate to replace Mocenigo. He was successfully elected to the position, but only ruled for a year before being assassinated by Ezio Auditore during his private *Carnevale* party.

Dante Moro (1460 - 1486) was originally captain of the Venetian city guard. When Marco Barbarigo began to desire Dante's wife

Carlotta, he arranged an assassination attempt. Dante survived but was left horrifically wounded, his mind broken. Marco exploited Dante's infantile state to take his wife and employ him as his bodyguard and enforcer. Dante outlived his master, but was eventually killed by Ezio as he and Silvio Barbarigo attempted to reach a ship in the *Arsenale*.

Silvio Barbarigo (1435 - 1486), also known as *Il Rosso,* was the state inquisitor of Venice and cousin to Marco Barbarigo. At an early age he prevented a plot against his uncle by the Soranzos by having the family killed at an Easter celebration. Ten years later he would have that same uncle murdered, claiming his wealth for himself. Silvio was responsible for sourcing the poison used in the murder of Giovanni Mocenigo. After the death of Marco Barbarigo he took up residence in the fortified *Arsenale*. The fortress was eventually breached by Bartolomeo d'Alviano's mercenaries. As Silvio fled to the safety of his ship he was caught and killed by Ezio.The fortress was eventually breached by Bartolomeo d'Alviano's mercenaries. As Silvio fled to the safety of his ship he was caught and killed by Ezio.

THE CONSTANTINOPLE CONFRONTATION

3 : D : 5
#A

PRINCE AHMET

Prince Ahmet (c. 1465 - 1512) was the presumed heir to the Ottoman Empire, tapped by Sultan Bayezid as his official successor. Outwardly, Ahmet was a grateful son who shared his father's distaste for war. As such, he appeared to be incapable of adapting himself to the requirements of the Sultanate—namely, earning the support of the Janissary corps. However, Ahmet was in fact a high-ranking Templar and his strong but clandestine support for the Byzantine Templar insurgency against his father's Empire split his priorities into an improbable arrangement; he could not openly side with one without repudiating the other.

The prince had another plan, however. Having discovered one of the Masyaf keys and investigating its purpose, Ahmet was intent on acquiring all the First Civilization knowledge rumored to be locked away in Altaïr's mysterious library. He thought that if he gained the information he believed was hidden in the Assassins' Sanctum, he could then take control of his father's empire and steer it towards the Templar's purpose without plunging the region into total chaos. His brother Selim's strong bid for the throne, combined with the support of the Janissaries for his rival, made Ahmet's goal of obtaining all the keys even more imperative. This conflict set up the brothers for an inevitable confrontation, with Selim choking Ahmet to death for his betrayal of the Empire.

3 : D : 5
#B

PRINCE SELIM

Prince Selim (1465 - 1520), also known as Selim the Grim and Selim the Steadfast, was a fierce and determined man: a ruthless warrior with the sensibilities of a poet, moderately religious, excessively hungry for war and ravenously ambitious—quite like his nearest Roman equivalent, Cesare Borgia. But Selim was no Templar—he was an Ottoman through and through, and hoped to see his father's Empire expand over the whole of the known world.

However, as the youngest living son of Sultan Bayezid II, Selim had little hope of gaining the Sultanate for himself by honest means. So, with the secret support of the Sultan's Janissaries, he decided to take it by force, and set about waging a determined battle against his father. After many years of conflict, Selim was victorious. In early 1512, Bayezid abdicated his throne, passing it to Selim instead of his preferred son, Ahmet. Less than a month later, the old Sultan was dead, though it remains unknown whether this was due to illness or a more nefarious cause.

Selim's ascendance marked the first time in the history of the Ottoman Empire that the Janissaries, and not the sitting Sultan, selected their next leader.

3 : D : 5
#C

MANUEL PALAIOLOGOS

As a boy, Manuel Palaiologos (c. 1454 - 1512) was heavily influenced by the tales of his family's tragic fall from power, and their loss of the Byzantine throne to the Ottomans. By the time he was a young man, he and his brother Andreas had joined the Templars in an effort to win their empire back. But unlike Andreas, who preferred a direct militaristic approach, Manuel was content to rely on more subtle means to attain his goals: he moved to the Ottoman capital and sold his rights to the throne to Bayezid II for a cozy pension. Shortly thereafter, he joined the Ottoman navy and converted to Islam. On the surface, therefore, Manuel was the very model of a modern Ottoman—learned, curious, and proud of his adopted country. But beneath this façade lay a darker truth: Manuel was taking advantage of Bayezid's generous immigration policies by bringing dozens of loyal Byzantine partisans into the city each month. By the mid-1500s, Manuel had amassed a sizeable Templar army inside the Ottoman Empire.

As crafty as he was, however, Manuel's love of riches and his penchant for debauchery prevented him from truly leading the Templars. He was, in other words, reluctant to abuse the high position he had already attained. Late in his life, around 1509, the Sultan's favored son, Prince Ahmet, discovered Manuel's Templar ties and the two decided to join forces, preferring the Templar ideology above all other cultural constraints. A younger and more charismatic man, Ahmet comfortably slipped into the role of leader, while Manuel—now nearing sixty—found his niche playing second in command to the man who had already been guaranteed the Sultanate. Whether Manuel planned to eventually turn on Ahmet is unknown—he was assassinated by Ezio Auditore in Cappadocia before he could ever make his bid for the throne.

3 : D : 5
#D

SHAHKULU

Very little was known about the life of this ruthless soldier, save that he was born into an oppressed Turkoman tribe in eastern Anatolia. Though raised within the boundaries of the Empire, Shahkulu fell in with the Templars at a young age after an Ottoman ambush left him an orphan. His hatred for the Ottoman Turks was outmatched only by his furious determination to eliminate all opposition to the Templar ideology. A cold strategist and fearsome fighter, Shahkulu was a respected leader who knew how to inspire loyalty through fear among his forces.

Owing to his allegiance to the Templars, Shahkulu's devotion to the ideology of a New World Order trumped his frosty attitude towards Manuel's Byzantines, and many of the other Ottoman-born Templars serving with him. He eventually met his end at Ezio's hand in the caverns of Cappadocia, where he and Manuel had been arming a large army in preparation for an assault against the Ottomans.

OTHERS

3 : D : 6
#A

GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA

Girolamo Savonarola (1452 - 1498) was a Dominican friar who used an Apple of Eden to take control of Florence between 1494 and 1498, in an attempt to create what he thought would be the perfect religious republic.

Born in Ferrara, Savonarola became a friar in 1475 and spent much of the 1480s preaching his message of spiritual purification in Florence, to little effect. In 1487 he left Florence, and by the following year found himself in Forlì. Upon his arrival Savonarola heard rumors of a powerful artifact—an Apple of Eden—that had been brought to the city. Following the rumors, Savonarola eventually stole the Apple of Eden from Assassin Ezio Auditore.

Returning to Florence, Savonarola used the power of the Apple to influence the minds of the people, including important civic leaders, and took control of the city. Convinced that the Renaissance had led to the moral decay he believed tainted everything around him, Savonarola called for the destruction of all paintings, books and other such "frivolities". By 1498, however, the Assassins had broken his hold over the populace, which rose up against Savonarola to burn him at the stake. However, Ezio took pity on him and killed Savonarola himself, preventing what would have been a horrible death.

3 : D : 6
#B

CHARLES DE LA MOTTE

Charles de la Motte was a French marquis, a member of the Templar Order and an ally of the commander of the Papal Armies, Cesare Borgia. A skilled combatant, he commanded a force of French mercenaries.

Charles first became involved in the conflict between Cesare Borgia and the Assassin Brotherhood in 1503. At Barletta, in southeastern Italy, he entered a tournament in order to demonstrate the superiority of French knights against those of Italy. The Assassins hoped to take advantage of the event to weaken Cesare's relationship with France by forcing him to applaud the prowess of his own knights. In order to achieve this, the Brotherhood infiltrated the tournament and poisoned the French knight's supplies, thus ensuring an Italian victory.

Despite the involvement of the Assassins, the tournament at Barletta did little to sour Cesare's relationship with de la Motte. Later that year, Cesare invited de la Motte and his forces into Rome in order to lure the Assassins out of hiding. The ruse was successful and the combined strength of French mercenaries and Papal Guards cost many Assassins their lives.

3 : D : 6
#C

GIULIANO & LORENZO DE' MEDICI

Lorenzo de' Medici (1449 - 1492), also known as *il Magnifico* ("the magnificent"), was an Italian diplomat, statesman and patron of the arts. At the age of 20, he inherited control of the Republic of Florence, ushering in what is often considered the city's golden age. Under his rule Florence became the centre of the Renaissance, and home to artists such as Leonardo da Vinci and Sandro Botticelli.

> LORENZO DE' MEDICI

When Lorenzo was a boy, Giovanni Auditore saved him from drowning in the Arno River. This event marked the beginning of a long friendship, and Lorenzo became an ally of the Assassin Brotherhood. In 1476, Templars executed Giovanni. Two years later, they made an attempt upon Lorenzo's life, but he was saved by Giovanni's son Ezio.

Giuliano de' Medici (1453 - 1478) was Lorenzo's younger brother. Handsome and charming, he was well-loved by the people. Unfortunately, Bernardo Baroncelli and Francesco de' Pazzi stabbed him nineteen times on the steps of the Duomo in their attempt to seize control of Florence for the Templars in 1478.

Later, Templar Grand Master Rodrigo Borgia hired the Orsi brothers to seize Forlì and recover Riario's research into the location of Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad's Codex. While they laid siege to the city, two Assassins, Niccolò Machiavelli and Ezio Auditore, arrived in Forlì seeking to hide an Apple of Eden. Ludovico and Checco jumped at the opportunity, kidnapped Caterina's children and attempted to trade them for the Apple. Instead, they were both assassinated by Ezio; though Checco managed to seriously injure him, leading to the Apple being taken by Girolamo Savonarola.

3 : D : 6
#D

LUDOVICO & CHECCO ORSI

Ludovico and Checco Orsi were nobles of Forlì in the late 15th century. The brothers found life in the small town dull and turned to money lending. They were successful, perhaps in part because of their tendency to murder anyone who did not

› CHECCO ORSI

pay their debts. In 1488, Caterina Sforza hired them to assassinate her husband Girolamo Riario, Lord of Forlì, after she discovered that he was a Templar. On April 14, they entered the government palace and killed Riario in broad daylight.

3 : D : 6
#E

PEROTTO CALDERON

Perotto Calderon (unknown - 1498) was a member of the Assassin Brotherhood, and allegedly father to Giovanni Borgia.

Much of Perotto's life remains a mystery. His first recorded appearance was as master to the young painter and Assassin Francesco Vecellio. By 1498, he was working undercover as a Borgia courier in close contact with Lucrezia Borgia, who was at the time confined to a convent. Over time the two grew close, eventually becoming involved in a relationship.

Then, disaster struck. Lucrezia became pregnant and the child—a boy named Giovanni—was born severely deformed. While it is unclear whether Perotto was actually the child's father, the birth of Giovanni exposed their affair and Perotto was beaten and imprisoned by Borgia guards. Driven by the need to rescue Giovanni, he escaped and retrieved the child. Though the doctors could not help the boy, Perotto knew of an artifact held by the Assassins, the Shroud, which possessed mysterious healing capabilities. He traveled to Agnadello in search of it, but the Assassins guarding it would not grant him access. Desperate, he fought and killed them, then used the Shroud to heal Giovanni.

However, the Assassins could not let Perotto's betrayal of the Creed stand. Members of the Brotherhood converged upon Agnadello, and though Perotto used his skill with a the bow to fend them off for a time he was eventually overwhelmed and executed.

3 E

CONNOR

[Ratonhnhaké:ton]

1756 – UNKNOWN

Ratonhnhaké:ton was an Assassin who rose to prominence during the American Revolution, fighting against Templar forces. Ratonhnhaké:ton's mother, a *Kanien'kehá:ka* woman named Kaniehtí:io, conceived a child with a British Templar named Haytham Kenway, who was searching for a First Civilization Temple. When Kaniehtí:io learned about Haytham's allegiances, she told him to leave and never saw him again. Despite knowing the father's affiliations, the villagers allowed her to raise her son within their community.

When Ratonhnhaké:ton was four years old, his mother died in a fire that he believed was caused by Charles Lee, then a British soldier. His meeting with Lee scarred him deeply and was a catalyst for the actions he would take throughout his life. As a young man, his biggest challenge was coming to terms with his deep-rooted anger. It fed from several tributaries: his mother, his unknown father, the fact that he was not allowed a normal childhood, the treatment of his people and most of all, the immense burden that rested on his shoulders through no choice of his own. However, in spite of the resentment he felt early in his life, he was a leader and a special individual who was destined for great things.

Strong and quick to learn, Ratonhnhaké:ton thrived as a fledgling hunter. Also very perceptive from the outset, he recognized a clear difference between his tribe and the neighbouring *Kanien'kehá:ka* villages. His innate ability to perceive threats and to adjust to his environment had set him apart from from other children of his age. Although he did not yet realize it, these talents were passed down from his father.

› CONNOR AGED 4

By the time Ratonhnhaké:ton turned fourteen, his wisdom had grown beyond that of the community. He began to understand the distinctive nature of his village. The Clan Mother explained to him that their village lay on sacred ground, and that their main duty was to keep it hidden from the outside world. Once she considered him to be ready, the Clan Mother opened a chest and removed a small glass sphere, which was a Piece of Eden.

Soon afterwards, Ratonhnhaké:ton had a vision in which he was transformed into an eagle. The vision urged him to seek out a special symbol and to embark on a quest to stop the destructive activities of the Templars. Ratonhnhaké:ton emerged from these visions completely changed, having been entrusted with the grave responsibility to not only save his village from the Templars, but also to prevent their domination of North America. And so Ratonhnhaké:ton embarked on a mission that would alter the course of history and the portrait of the American territory.

Ratonhnhaké:ton questioned his involvement in current events, and felt that his participation was more of an obligation than a choice. Despite this questioning, he eventually reached a decrepit old manor decorated with the insignia he was looking for. The house belonged to an old Assassin named Achilles, once a prominent leader of the North American Assassin Brotherhood. After several failed attempts, Ratonhnhaké:ton managed to obtain an audience with the old man.

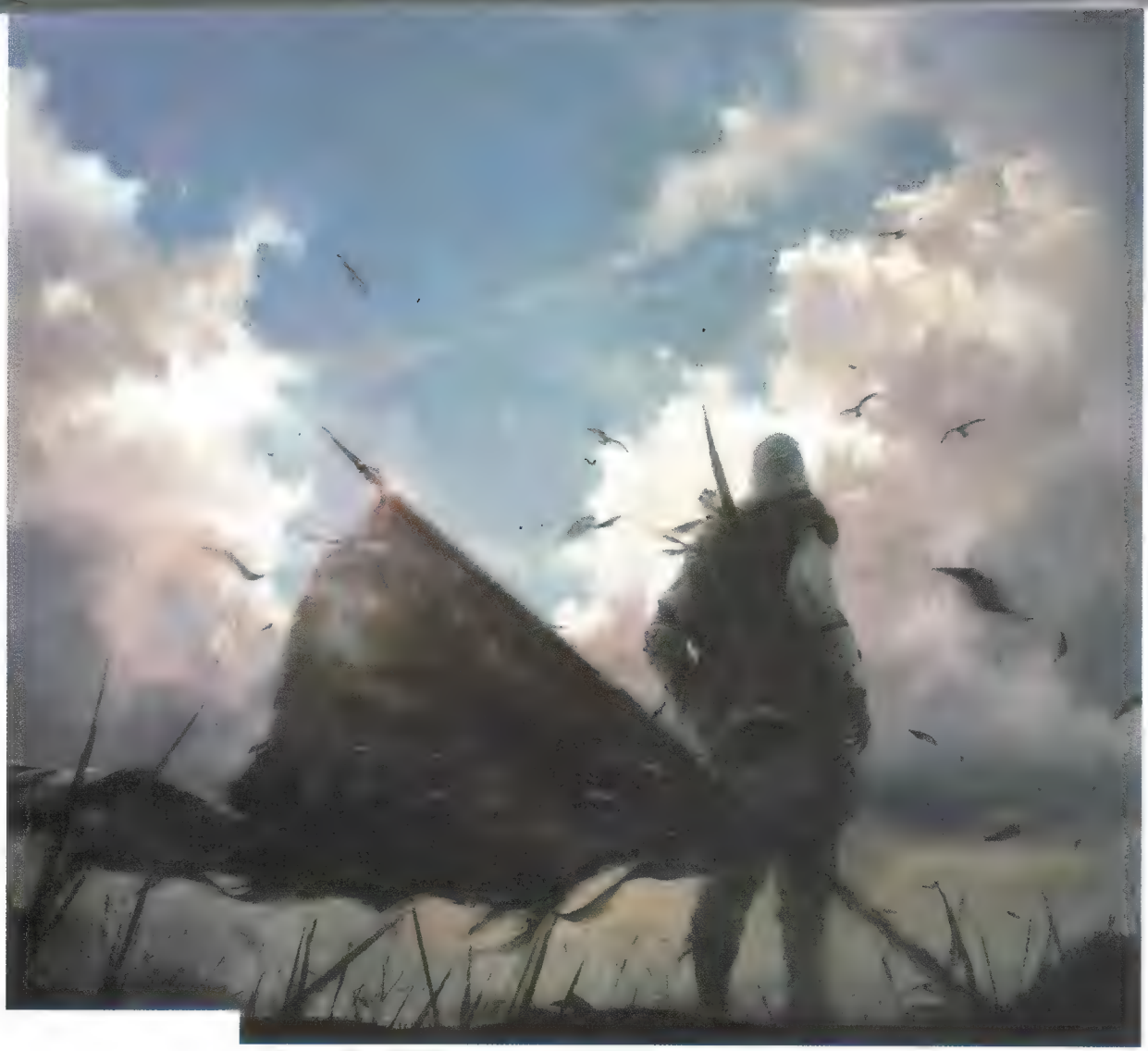
At first, Achilles was reluctant to train Ratonhnhaké:ton, having abandoned his former fight with the Templars, and now living in isolation in his home. However, Achilles came to notice the boy's abilities and inner strength, and took h[im] under his wing. Achilles provided him with all th[e] tools and training needed to make him into a power[-]ful Assassin warrior, including special clothing an[d] weapons.

Ratonhnhaké:ton trained for several years to becom[e] an Assassin. He spent any free time familiarizing himself with the Templars' operations in colonia[l] America, learning about their members, particu[-]larly his father and Charles Lee. He was anxious t[o] confront them in order to end their schemes and t[o] secure freedom for his people, but he was aware [of] the enemy's power and uncompromising tactics.

He was determined to discover the next Tem[-]plar conspiracy and to take action to thwart their attempts at taking control of the fragile American territory. Patience, precision and restraint were needed at every moment of his training to master his skills and improve his knowledge.

After several years of training, Ratonhnhaké:ton was ready to take on more serious ventures. While making his way to Boston to collect tools and material to restore his master's house, Achilles gave him the name of Connor. Before being formally inducted in the Order, in March of 1770, Connor was involved in the Boston Massacre, the first violent confrontation between British Redcoats and colonial citizens. Connor saw that the Templars had orchestrated the incident and realized the extent of their manipulative power. He used the event to become familiar with the city and acquaint himself with Assassin allies, most notably Samuel Adams, an old friend of Achilles.

› CONNOR'S TOMAHAWK



During his time in Boston, Connor participated in the event known as the Boston Tea Party, alongside Samuel Adams and other colonists. In Boston, Connor uncovered Templar smuggling networks, under the leadership of William Johnson. Connor later learned that the Templars sought to use revenue gained from tea smuggling operations to buy western lands.

To stop the Templar tea smuggling activities, and ultimately to prevent the expansion of the Templar Order on the frontier, on December 16, 1773, Connor intercepted and boarded British ships filled with tea, arriving at the Boston harbor. Connor and his allies unloaded the tea and dumped the crates into the water. With the drowning of tea smuggling profits, Connor believed that he eradicated Johnson's plan of purchasing land, including his home village.

However, his decision to spare Johnson's life proved harmful to his village. Johnson was able to raise other financial resources, thanks to Templar support, to buy territory already inhabited by indigenous people. Ultimately, Connor was only able to stop the purchase by killing Johnson.

After eliminating the Templar, Connor uncovered another plot: John Pitcairn was planning to destroy Patriot weapons and supplies in Concord. Moreover, Connor learned that Pitcairn was chasing colonial activists Samuel Adams and John Hancock.

Connor's participation in the battles of Lexington and Concord proved crucial to the Patriots' success. He not only warned them that British troops were on their way to capture weapon supplies, but he also alerted Samuel Adams and John Hancock that they were being pursued by British troops. Connor believed that John Pitcairn aimed to kill both Adams and Hancock. He later learned that Pitcairn never intended to kill any Patriots, as he was merely trying to broker a peace deal between Loyalists and Patriots. However, Connor never believed that story. The colonists went on to successfully defend

Lexington and Concord, thanks largely to the fact that Connor was able to protect their store of guns and ammunitions in Concord.

After the battles of Lexington and Concord, Connor discovered another Templar conspiracy, this time to kill the Commander-in-Chief George Washington, and to replace him with the Templar Charles Lee. While attempting to arrest Thomas Hickey, the alleged conspirator, Connor was falsely accused, alongside Hickey, by British authorities investigating a counterfeiting ring in New York. Connor was then sent to Bridewell Prison. With the help of Mason Weems, he attempted to escape, but the power of the Templar machinations proved to be too much as Charles Lee and his comrades put Connor up for execution in Hickey's place, and charged him with conspiracy to assassinate George Washington. Just before the execution, Achilles and the Assassins rescued Connor, giving him the opportunity to chase down Hickey and kill him.

Connor was left searching to find his balance and to accept the gravity of his place in this scheme. As a young man full of idealism, he believed anything was possible. However, as he grew older he realized that the world was comprised of shades of gray. Through his experiences during the revolution, Connor became a man and a leader, learning that compromise and collaboration were the only way forward. A truth that a scary few choose to acknowledge in a time lauded for its liberty and humanity. At last Connor understood the complex situation in front of him, and the potential ramifications of the Templar plots.

Connor's confrontations with the Templars did not prevent him from forming an alliance with his father, Haytham Kenway, in order to pursue his Assassin missions. This collaboration helped him limit the damage inflicted by Templar Benjamin Church, who had taken to stealing colonial supplies and selling them for his own profit. For a time, Connor thought that peace was attainable and a partnership with the Templars was possible. His collaboration with his father and the potential alliance with the Templars worried Achilles, who remained suspicious of their true intentions.

Sure enough, Haytham's constant backing of Charles Lee and his continued plots against George Washington's efforts convinced Connor that peace with the Templars was impossible. He was wrong to believe that his father could change.

Though he was not the first Assassin to believe that an association with the Templars was possible, Connor was quickly reminded of how different their core beliefs were when he saw the Templars' actions on the field of battle.

In June of 1778, Charles Lee's betrayal of George Washington at the Battle of Monmouth demonstrated the Templars' willingness to sabotage the Patriots' efforts. The Templars refused to give up control and saw the potential to re-imagine the American territory on their terms. After Monmouth, Connor distanced himself from Washington, but on several occasions was drawn to contribute to his operations. He helped Washington identify British spies in the Patriot ranks and prevented the murder of West Point Commander Benedict Arnold, though Arnold would ultimately defect to the British for a large sum of money.

Connor realized that the key to both American independence and preventing a Templar takeover lay in the protection of George Washington. Connor collaborated with Washington's *aide-de-camp*, Marquis de Lafayette, to give the troops proper training and to plan new military strategies for Washington. Both men understood that Washington's very presence could inspire the colonists. Faced with a tenacious enemy, Connor and Lafayette knew that only George Washington could rally the colonists and guarantee their freedom.

However, Connor's support of Washington came at a cost. Through his operations as a British officer during the Seven Years War and as the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army during the revolution, Washington was often led to take action against Native communities. During the Seven Years War, Washington ordered the destruction of several indigenous villages across the frontier. In the Revolutionary War, Native alliances with the British forced Washington to organize similar expeditions against their settlements.

Actions like these confused Connor, who saw that the Patriots viewed concepts such as justice and freedom very differently. Connor reluctantly helped Washington on several occasions despite knowing that his actions would be detrimental to his community and territory. Ultimately, Connor believed that he would be able to protect his community from Washington's threats, and that he could manage the situation. He recognized that Washington was the key to preventing Templar control and, as a result, was forced to sacrifice some of his principles and values.

Washington's prominence in the Patriot movement made him a highly visible target for the Templars, who understood the power and the symbolism of Washington's leadership. In order to prevent Templar control, Connor had to protect Washington, and the only way to do so was to eliminate the most serious threats, namely Haytham Kenway and Charles Lee. With this in mind, Connor brought the Marquis de Lafayette into the Assassin's conspiracy room and planned an attack on the Templar headquarters in Fort George, New York.

Before attacking the source of the Templar's authority, Connor took part in the final confrontations to secure independence for the colonists. French ships were brought into Chesapeake Bay to engage the British Navy. After an exchange of heavy cannon fire, the French Navy emerged victorious. This battle marked

the end of the Revolutionary War, as Great Britain could no longer afford to support the conflict.

As a reward for his service, the French granted Connor the use of French ships, which he sailed under a British flag. This ruse guaranteed a safe passage to New York, and a subsequent approach to Fort George so that he could get to Charles Lee. Since Fort George could not be directly infiltrated, Connor devised a plan to enter it through a series of tunnels while the Comte de Grasse bombarded the fort from their ships in the harbor.

Prior to the Fort George mission, Connor visited his old master Achilles, who reminded him that in order to fully remove the Templar threat in North America, he would also have to eliminate his father. Connor executed his plan and made his way into Fort George underground while the naval attack raged above. Once inside, instead of finding Charles Lee, he found his father, who had sent Lee away to protect him. Connor tried to sway his father one last time, but Haytham concluded that reconciliation was impossible and that one of them had to die. After an exhausting battle, Connor killed Haytham with his hidden blade.

While attending his father's funeral, Connor was captured by Templar guards and brought before Charles Lee. They gave him a beating before he escaped. Soon after, Connor boarded the HMS Jersey, a prison ship controlled by the Templars, assuming that the ship would lead him to Lee, who had gone to the harbor to catch a ferry.

Connor then learned that Lee was staying at the Green Dragon Pub in Boston. He chased Lee down until they reached the Boston shipyard where a serious battle ensued. Lee was shot by Connor, but managed to escape the confrontation despite being severely injured. Connor was able to track Lee to Philadelphia, where he killed him on October 2, 1782, effectively eliminating the last of the Templar's leadership in North America. Connor then took Haytham's amulet from Lee's neck. Lee was wearing the amulet that Haytham had given him prior to Lee's departure from Fort George. Connor took it from his neck and buried it.

After taking down the Templars and securing independence for the United States, Connor remained unsatisfied. Although he had accomplished all his goals, he could not help but feel that he had failed in his purpose.

The ramifications of the American Revolution were unclear. On one hand, new notions of sovereignty and freedom were laid out, giving men and women unprecedented political rights. On the other hand, the same could not be said for Connor's fellow villagers, other Native American tribes, women, slaves, and other minorities. Indigenous villages were destroyed and people were relocated or simply killed to make room for new settlements. Meanwhile, slavery not only persisted, it expanded across the new American territory.

While Connor played a major role in securing peace and freedom, he realized that other dark forces were at play. Within the ideals of freedom and a better future for the American people lay difficult questions that would present new challenges for the Assassin Brotherhood.

3 : E : 1
#A

GEORGE WASHINGTON

George Washington (1732 - 1799) was born on a plantation in Westermoreland County, Virginia, and is considered the "Father of his country" because of his personal, political, and military achievements.

Little is known about George Washington's childhood, a fact which many biographers, most importantly Mason Locke Weems, would later exploit to construct stories and legends telling of his early life. In one such tale, published in 1800 and entitled *The Life of Washington*, Weems claimed that the six-year-old Washington once took a hatchet to his father's cherry tree and chopped it down, before openly confessing the crime to his father. This myth, among others, would help to promote him as a virtuous man, and as the paternalist figure of the American nation.

Washington grew up in a planter family that owned tobacco plantations and slaves. After his father succumbed to a deadly fever that ravaged the Chesapeake region, Washington's prospects at raising his social status were diminished. Without his father's influence, it seemed unlikely that he would become a prominent figure in Virginian society. That all changed when Washington married Martha Dandridge Custis, a wealthy widow from the Tidewater area, making him one of the richest men in Virginia. The marriage also gave him control of about forty slaves, bequeathed as part of the estate of Washington's wife first husband. Washington later inherited the rights to his family's Mount Vernon plantation and, after finding remarkable success as a planter and businessman, quickly rose to the highest echelons of Virginia's social elite.

In November of 1753, the young Washington volunteered with the British Army for an important mission to inform the French of Britain's claims to a vast region of the Ohio Territory. This episode paved the way for the Seven Years War in North America (1756 - 1763), also known as the "French and Indian War", in which Washington's military career began.

He rose quickly through the military hierarchy becoming the Colonel and Commander-in-Chief of the Virginia Regiment, after its commander

General Edward Braddock was killed in an ambush set by the Templar Haytham Kenway and his Native allies. Washington was able to rally what remained of the troops. He was ultimately hailed as a hero in Virginia when Great Britain's victory was secured. During this time, Washington gained a vast array of political, military, and leadership skills. Years later, these would become crucial assets in the quest for American independence.

After the Seven Years War, Washington resigned from his commission and went back to his Mount Vernon plantation. However, in 1758, he returned to colonial politics and was elected to Virginia's provincial legislature, the House of Burgesses. Washington became a leader among Virginia's social elite, insisting on the importance of authority and keeping people of lower

social status distanced from the social, economic and political structures.

In the late 1760s, he began to involve himself in Virginia's protest movements against British colonial policies. Despite his opposition to the 1765 Stamp Act, he did not formally participate in the resistance movement against British measures before he introduced a proposal asking the colony of Virginia to boycott British goods until the 1967 Townshend Acts were repealed.

In 1774, Washington chaired a meeting calling for the organization on the First Continental Congress where discussions of a colonial response to British measures were held. He was among the Virginian representatives who participated in the Congress held in Philadelphia. During the Second Continental Congress, Washington was appointed Major General and Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army. His military experience, integrity, charisma, and imposing figure gained the confidence of most of the other delegates, though the Templars were not satisfied with the nomination.

Washington's first contact with the half-native Assassin Connor came after the Battles of Lexington and Concord in April of 1775. The fact that he shared objectives that were similar to those of the Assassin made him a prominent target for the Templars. In fact, Connor uncovered a Templar conspiracy to assassinate Washington involving John Pitcairn, William Johnson, and Thomas Hickey. Initially, Connor believed that the Templars had sided with the Loyalists, but later learned that this was not so. The Templars sought to eliminate Washington in order to take control of the colonial military apparatus.

Even though Connor and Washington collaborated on a number of occasions, their relationship was strained. Years later, Connor found out that Washington had participated in the burning of entire Native settlements during the Seven Years War, including Connor's home village. During the Revolutionary War, reports of Natives working with British troops compelled Washington to order similar attacks. Although both men shared the same goals of freedom and independence, Connor could not abide Washington's actions against indigenous populations.

As Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army, General Washington had more than Loyalist, Templar and British forces to deal with. He was challenged by several of his closest allies. He fought constantly with the Continental Congress in order to receive sufficient labor, financial and military resources.

A series of events known as the Conway Cabal even hinted at his potential replacement as Commander of the Continental Army. While no formal procedure would ever be brought against him to relieve him of his command, these events posed a serious threat to his leadership. Similar tensions arose during the rest of the war, which challenged Washington's capabilities to rally soldiers and workers. Washington imposed himself between Congress and the officers of the Continental Army who had not received their pay for many years. Known as the Newburgh Conspiracy, Washington backed Congress and asked the officers to be patient and to unite for the cause.

The lack of workers and soldiers during the war forced him to consider the idea of recruiting slaves to fight the enemy. However, he was forced to discard this idea to maintain the South's support in the war.

Throughout his life, his silence and vague stance on the issue of slavery and many others contributed to his mythic reputation, resulting in different groups

portraying him to suit their own ideals. This element of ambiguity was a defining feature of Washington's personality. During the Revolutionary War, his primary objective was to free the colonies from British rule, and was willing to use every means possible to accomplish his mission.

The poor condition and training of his soldiers compelled him to draw upon outside help – most notably Lafayette, Baron Von Steuben and Casimir Pulaski – in order to unite them towards a common cause, and to ensure proper preparations for war.

Washington's major highlights as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army include operations against the British in Boston, campaigns in New York, his attempted defences of Philadelphia, and the Battle of Monmouth. Throughout his military career, he received severe criticism regarding his battlefield activities. The Templars questioned his military capability to lead the colonies towards independence. In fact, Washington was not a particularly good commander, as he lost nearly every battle he fought.

However, at the end of the conflict, he received significant help from France. After a successful French naval encounter at the Battle of the Chesapeake in 1781, Washington delivered the final attack on the British Army at Yorktown, marking the end of the Revolutionary War. When Washington finally resigned from his post as Commander-in-Chief, he became a symbol of republican citizenship.

Once again, Washington's retirement at Mount Vernon proved to be temporary. He was convinced to attend the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787, where he was appointed president of the Convention. In 1789, following negotiations held to determine the practicalities of forming a government, the Electoral College unanimously elected George Washington as the first President of the United States of America. He was re-elected for a second mandate in the 1792 election. Throughout his tenure as President, he tried to prevent divisions within Congress. He was not a member of any political party and saw his closest partners forming different political alliances. He equated partisanship with disloyalty and feared that the factions would threaten the stability of the newborn nation.

George Washington's Farewell Address spoke of his desire to see his comrades set aside their narrow individual interests in service to the larger interest of national unity. He warned his colleagues against partisanship in domestic politics. He claimed that the independence of the American people rested on the unity of the states and on the various elements that came together to form the American society. Washington's Farewell Address is considered an important document in American history, and underscores his role as a paternal republican figure.

Washington's voluntary retirement and refusal to serve a third term marked a clear distinction between the American presidency and the European monarchy. Moreover, by resigning on his terms, Washington emphasized his republican allegiance and confronted the contradiction of the early American public, which tended to portray him as a republican king.

3 : E : 1
#B

ACHILLES

> A YOUNGER ACHILLES

Mentor of the Colonial Assassin's Order in America, the Brotherhood had been quite powerful under his reign prior to the Seven Years War (1756 - 1763). Dozens of Assassins were scattered across the thirteen colonies, working to promote and maintain peace. During this time, Achilles (1710-1781) married a woman named Abigail with whom he had a son, named Connor. However, after the Seven Years War, his wife and son succumbed to typhoid fever and died. This event would go on to haunt Achilles. He never forgave himself for leaving them too often on their own, while he was pursuing Assassin's missions. This episode of his life, among others, contributed to his later isolation and detachment from the world.

When the Templar Haytham Kenway landed in Boston in 1754, Achilles grew worried about the rapidly growing Templar influence in British America. Achilles kept a close eye on Haytham, eliminating all the Templars he could and using his network to keep the rapidly growing Templar rite in check. A new sense of urgency and purpose further strengthened his Brotherhood and Achilles felt comfortably in control of the situation.

Although he tried to contain the Templar's advancement, Haytham's reach, influence and power appeared to be without limits. Achilles became uneasy as the Templar threat grew to become more real than ever before. The Templars were immensely successful during the Seven Years War, emerging from it with renewed influence over the continent.

In the aftermath of the war, as result of merciless operations by the Templar Order against the Assassins, the Colonial Assassin Brotherhood was left in ruins, its leadership decimated. Achilles was the only known Assassin to survive this purge. Haytham allowed him to live in exchange for his resignation as the Assassin leader. He was brought before the Templar leaders – Haytham Kenway, Charles Lee, John Pitcairn,

> AN OLDER ACHILLES

Benjamin Church, Thomas Hickey, and William Johnson – where Haytham offered to spare him and his family on the condition that they disappear into the wilderness. And so, to protect his wife and son, Achilles swore to lay down his arms, promising never to oppose the Templars again. However, after they both died of typhoid, Achilles was completely destroyed.

Under his watch, the Brotherhood faltered. His inaction allowed the Templar Order to grow unchecked, to the point where it now controlled an entire nation. Achilles withdrew into the countryside, away from particularities related to the Assassin Order. Thoroughly defeated by the Templars, he resigned himself to live out the rest of his days peacefully in his homestead.

The arrival of a young man searching for his identity challenged Achilles. Teenager Ratonhnhaké:ton was on a quest for identity, following a vision that urged him to seek out Assassin symbols and an individual who would help him in his mission. This vision led him to the crumbling home of Achilles. Convincing Achilles to train him was no easy task for the boy since the former mentor had lost all faith in the Assassins.

When Ratonhnhaké:ton was attacked by thieves outside the house, Achilles came to his aid. After ousting the thieves, Achilles allowed the boy inside his home to discuss his purpose. Ratonhnhaké:ton convinced Achilles to tell the story of the Assassin Brotherhood and their struggle against the Templar Order. Achilles saw such determination and potential in the boy that he finally agreed to train him in the ways of a true Assassin. Achilles' hope in the Assassins was subsequently renewed to a certain extent.

Committed to Ratonhnhaké:ton's training, Achilles decided to restore his manor, and took his pupil to Boston to get the proper tools and materials for the renovations. Achilles then renamed him Connor in order to avoid any trouble in the city. On March 5, 1770, they witnessed the commotion near the Massachusetts Town House, which would later be known as the Boston Massacre. Achilles recognized it as a demonstration of Templar force.

The severity of the Templar's acts persuaded Achilles to offer Connor the traditional Assassin hidden blades. He also provided his *protégé* with the various Assassin tools and clothing that he had collected over the

years. Achilles placed his faith and confidence in Connor's willingness to fight the Templars.

When the tensions between the British and the colonists gave way to the Revolutionary War, Achilles continued to advise Connor in the fight against the Templars. He guided his mentee towards Assassin allies, like his friends Samuel Adams and Benjamin Tallmadge. He also recovered his belief that in order to pursue the Assassin mission of peace and freedom, all the Templars would have to be eliminated, including Connor's father, Haytham Kenway. In the midst of the war for independence, Achilles grew suspicious of Connor's intentions of cooperating with his father, having experienced firsthand the vicious nature of the Templars.

Over the course of the Revolutionary War, Achilles witnessed the progress made by the Assassins. However, his failing health meant that he was unable to offer much support to Connor in his fight with the Templars. Just before he passed away in his homestead, he left a note for Connor, urging him to pursue his quest and continue the fight on the Brotherhood's behalf.

› THOMAS JEFFERSON

› ALEXANDER HAMILTON

3 : E : 1
#C

FOUNDING FATHERS

The Founding Fathers of the United States of America were the individuals who defined the ideals and principles that would build the political foundations of the United States of America.

In the aftermath of the Seven Years War (1756 - 1763), the British Parliament implemented new laws and taxes on the colonies, prompting several influential colonial citizens to organize resistance movements. Benjamin Franklin is considered one of the most important Founding Fathers due to his early commitment to severing ties with Great Britain and his attempts to forge unity between the colonies.

Some of the Founding Fathers who participated in the Revolutionary War were friends of the Assassin Brotherhood. Both Samuel Adams and George Washington unknowingly contributed to the Assassin's mission against the Templars. Washington developed a close working relationship with the young Assassin known as Connor. They both shared the goal of independence and freedom, though they often disagreed on the methods to obtain it.

The Templar Order sought to impose its own vision of leadership over the American territory and opposed any association of the revolutionary leaders with the Assassin Brotherhood. Even with the elimination of the Templar leadership in North America, after independence was secured for the United States of America, there were still some Templar sympathizers left alive. Alexander Hamilton, a prominent figure in the establishment of the American nation as a soldier, an economist, and a political philosopher, was still associated with the Templars.

The values that would form the United States' nation were shaped by the leading political and literary minds of the Revolutionary Era. Thomas Jefferson, a representative from Virginia, was a crucial Founding Father as he was the main writer of the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Paine was an author who wrote a pamphlet titled *Common Sense*, which was widely distributed, and contained a persuasive argument calling for the colonies to separate from Great Britain.

The full list of Founding Fathers is extensive and reflects the variety of participants in the independence movement. The Founding Fathers were able to overcome divisive political differences between the thirteen colonies and form a cohesive unit.

3 : E : 1
#D

SAMUEL ADAMS

Samuel Adams (1722 - 1803) was a Founding Father of the United States of America and an ally of the Assassins. Born in Boston, he grew to be a leader in the grassroots movement against the measures implemented by Great Britain in North America. In 1765, he was elected to the Massachusetts Legislature, largely to protest the passing of the Stamp Act by the British Parliament.

He organized laborers, artisans, craftsmen, and tradesmen into a group of Patriots known as the Sons of Liberty, a political organization that worked against the British efforts to impose taxes on the colonies. In 1768, he wrote the Massachusetts Circular Letter, in which he challenged the various taxes implemented by the British crown.

These activities, among others, heightened tensions between the colonial citizens and the British military, culminating in the Boston Massacre, which Adams saw as a clear example of British tyranny. Adams was instrumental in organizing resistance to laws implemented by the British Parliament.

During the early troubles in Boston, Adams met the young Assassin Connor, who was the mentee of an old friend, Achilles. Although historians are uncertain if Adams directly participated in the events known as the Boston Tea Party, the Animus confirmed his contribution. The British government had passed the Tea Tax, which gave the East India Company the exclusive right to sell tea in America. On December 16, 1773, Adams walked away from a meeting to protest the Boston governor's approval of a three-pence tax applied to the tea when it arrived in Boston's harbor. He declared, "this meeting can do nothing further to save this country." Soon afterwards, Adams and Connor, with the contribution of Sons of Liberty members, threw crates of tea into the waters of Griffin's Wharf, calling for the colonists to unite and reject British rule.

The British authorities took notice of Adams activism. In April of 1775, they chased him as part of a military expedition in Lexington and Concord. Connor believed that the British Major John Pitcairn intended to assassinate Adams, information which had been vehemently denied by Pitcairn.

After these events, Adams increased his activism on a larger scale. Following the turmoil in Massachusetts, he participated in the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia. He involved himself in numerous military committees and approved the nomination of George Washington as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army.

Although Adams clearly maintained an anti-slavery position, and had freed his slave named Surry, he did not advocate publicly for the elimination of slavery. Despite Adams' visions of freedom and independence, Connor was particularly bothered by Adams cautiousness about pushing for the abolition of slavery.

In 1779, Samuel Adams returned to Boston, where he remained active in politics until the end of his term as Governor of Massachusetts in 1797. His speeches, writing, and activism made him a prominent figure of the American colonial resistance movement, a crucial ally to the Assassin Order, and an early figure of American independence.

3:E:1
#E

KANIEHTÍ:IO

Kaniehtí:io (1728-1760) was a *Kanien'kehá:ka* woman who was a friend to the Assassin Brotherhood. She learned english from the Assassins and was able to converse with the British colonists. Her community gave her the responsibility of trading with them. Kaniehtí:io would visit the local Boston pubs to glean what she could of the culture and to investigate the colonists' intentions and encroachments on Native lands. As the European settlers intruded further onto their territory and became increasingly destructive –although sometimes masked as helpful – Kaniehtí:io realized that her people needed to re-evaluate its place in the balance of things in order to adjust to the ever-increasing presence of the colonists.

Prior to the Seven Years War, the relationship between the indigenous populations and the colonists changed dramatically. The British and French sought to expand their territories and interests westward, which disrupted the Native lifestyles and communities, and threatened their very survival. Just before the war broke out, Kaniehtí:io and some of her villagers were taken prisoner by British forces.

Kaniehtí:io was freed from captivity by a British man named Haytham Kenway and she realized that her community could no longer afford to ignore the outside world. She and Haytham developed a relationship based on their mutual interests. Together, they collaborated to kill British General and former Templar Edward Braddock, who threatened the lands not only of Kaniehtí:io's community, but also those of the Abenaki, Lenape, and Shawnee tribes. In July of 1755, they set up an ambush for Braddock as he marched on Fort Duquesne, and murdered him. In exchange, she helped Haytham gather information on a First Civilization Temple, eventually leading him to it.

Kaniehtí:io and Haytham grew closer and one night they conceived a child together. Devastated about what it meant to her honour and fearful of how Haytham would react, she chose to keep it secret from him. Anxious, she went to her village elders and Assassin leaders for advice and told them of her circumstance. When she discovered Haytham's Templar allegiances and true interest in the First Civilization Temple, she parted ways with him and never saw him again.

The people in Kaniehtí:io's village condemned her relationship with Haytham. His affiliations prompted them to seek her banishment from the community. However, after meeting with the Clan Mother, Kaniehtí:io was allowed to remain in the village so that she could deliver her child, with no questions asked. Although the members of her community knew the identity of the father, they agreed to raise the baby, named Ratonhnhaké:ton, as their own. After that, Kaniehtí:io's life with her son was untroubled.

However, that peace would not last long. A fire ravaged her village and Kaniehtí:io was trapped under a beam in a burning longhouse. The young Ratonhnhaké:ton tried to save his mother, but the fire was too intense, and the roof collapsed on her. In the years that followed, Connor was convinced that the man responsible for burning his village and killing his mother was Charles Lee, then a soldier in the British Army, and later revealed to be a Templar.

3 : E : 1
#F

LAFAYETTE

Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de La Fayette, better known as Lafayette (1757 - 1834) was a French aristocrat and military officer who joined the North American British colonists in their fight against the British during the War for Independence.

The French court attempted to prevent Lafayette's involvement in the Revolutionary War, but he defied it by boarding a cargo ship called *La Victoire* to join the conflict. In order to deceive the British spies who were chasing him, he dressed as a woman.

It is believed that Lafayette's involvement in the revolutionary conflict was not driven by any principles of American liberty but rather for his personal glory and fame, and a chance to fight the British. In any case, he offered his services to the Continental Congress without pay, which the representatives could not refuse.

On July 31, 1777, under the recommendation of Benjamin Franklin, Lafayette was appointed Major General in the Continental Army, and the Commander-in-Chief's *aide-de-camp*. Lafayette went on to develop an extremely close relationship with George Washington, his sincerity and honesty earning him the latter's trust and friendship.

On September 11, 1777, Lafayette saw his first action at the Battle of Brandywine where he was wounded in the leg. He continued to fight and organized an orderly retreat of his troops before receiving treatment for his injuries, which earned him praise from Washington, who cited him for bravery and military ardor.

Throughout the conflict, Lafayette's role of organizing and training the troops energized the colonists' morale. He cooperated with the Assassin Connor to plan many military operations and manage the troops. Lafayette helped to transform the ranks of boys into well-trained fighting men.

Lafayette was involved in several other battles. He played an important role in the confrontations near Barren Hill, Pennsylvania, and in the Battle of Monmouth in June of 1778. In Monmouth, he noticed the odd behavior and the timid attack of colonial General Charles Lee and sent a message to Washington, urging him to come to the front.

During his tenure with the Continental Army, Lafayette helped the colonists build a close partnership with France, by acting as a link for the two sides to establish contact.

He returned to Paris in 1779, only to come back to America in May of 1780 to serve in New York and New Jersey. During the final confrontations, Lafayette was transferred south to the siege of Yorktown, where the French provided critical support to the colonists. After the Revolutionary War, Lafayette returned to France and played a prominent role in the French Revolution.

3 : E : 1
#G

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Benjamin Franklin (1706 - 1790) was a Founding Father and an important figure of the American enlightenment period. He was a scientist, author, diplomat, inventor, printer, and editor who represented the ethos of the American self-made man.

Benjamin Franklin is remembered as "The First American" due to his early campaigning which promoted independence for the colonists. As one of the most prominent Founding Fathers, he embraced the revolutionary cause without restraint. His political cartoon "Join, or Die" published in 1754 was one of the first symbols calling for colonial unity.

Franklin was a key participant in the conception of the Declaration of Independence. As the representative of the Pennsylvania Assembly to the Second Continental Congress, he was one of the five men who drafted the document. On July 4, 1776, the final signing occurred and John Hancock mentioned that the representatives must now all hang together in order to fulfill the declaration's promise. Franklin then declared: "Yes, we must indeed all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately." This reinforced the significance of the Declaration of Independence and the high stakes involved in such a political maneuver.

In addition to his revolutionary activities within British colonial America, his tenure as the American ambassador to France between 1776 and 1785 helped form the Franco-American alliance, a partnership that was instrumental in leading the Patriots towards victory and freedom. Accordingly, he was out of America for almost all of the Revolutionary Era and, therefore, had limited interactions with the Assassin Connor.

› MYRIAM

› PRUDENCE

3 : E : 1
#H

HOMESTEAD WOMEN

Homestead women's condition during the Revolutionary Era marked a clash between the colonial settlement organization and the wilderness of the American territory on the frontier. Homestead women worked the land and evolved around the colonial households on the frontier.

Assassin sympathiser Prudence was farming the land to provide food for her family. She and her husband had left Boston and moved west to take advantage of the fertile lands beyond the Appalachian Mountains.

However, during the early clash between colonists and British authorities in the 1760s, women like Prudence were forced to resist the ever-increasing financial measures imposed on the colonists by the British government, which deeply affected the condition of colonial households. British authorities demanded Prudence's entire yield, effectively seeking to control and impose their authority on the colonial settlements on the frontier. The tension was rising between the colonists and the British authorities, and had a direct impact on the homesteads.

The Assassin ally Myriam was living on the frontier on her own terms. Her parents and siblings had died, forcing her to fend for herself in her life as a nomad, away from the cities. Myriam chose this lifestyle to obtain her independence. She typified the frontier colonists who were searching for freedom beyond the control of any authority. As a huntress, she fiercely protected her territory, and her way of life illustrated the variety of lifestyles available on the frontier, and the duty of each colonist to protect their homes.

Even if women like Prudence and Myriam were not Patriots, their condition and lifestyles illustrated an appropriation of the frontier and a reorganization of the economic, social, and political structures of the colonies.

The various lifestyles and activities of homestead women during the Revolutionary era highlighted a particular quest for independence and freedom, which was becoming increasingly American. However, as many minority groups realized, Assassin Connor among them, the ideals of the American Revolution had their limits, and did not reach out to everyone within the new American nation.

3 : E : 1
#I

DUNCAN LITTLE

Duncan Little (1742 – unknown) was an Assassin of Irish descent and a former minister based in Boston, Massachusetts. Despite not completely abandoning his beliefs, Little distanced himself from the Church, which he felt had destroyed a fundamental part of its power and potential.

His new occupation mirrored his previous missionary work. Little served the community as a kind of social worker for the Boston residents. He felt his activities helped the community more than his time as a shepherd, but his new profession demanded more grassroots activism and direct confrontation. His oratory skills and stubborn nature allowed him to protect his fellow citizens against thugs and British authorities.

The Assassin Connor noticed Little's resilient nature and his connections with the people, and promptly recruited him into the Assassin Brotherhood. Like Connor, Little offered aid to people in need, and was instrumental in organizing physical resistance to British tax collectors and Templar smugglers. He was a man of action and helped stop a Templar network of thieves. He also gathered citizens in Boston to fight against Templar gangs. Little was willing to pursue the enemy into the streets in order to defend citizens and merchants, and to thwart Templar smuggling operations.

3 : E : 1
#J

PAUL REVERE

Paul Revere (1735 - 1818) was an ally of the American Assassin Brotherhood and a member of the Sons of Liberty who was active during the colonial resistance against the British crown. He is best known for his "Midnight Ride" on horseback, on the night of April 18, 1775, when he attempted to warn the towns of Lexington and Concord of a British raid. He and the Assassin Connor rode from Boston to Lexington to inform Patriots Samuel Adams and John Hancock about the movements of British troops, who hoped to arrest Adams and Hancock in Lexington and seize weapons and ammunition in Concord.

When Revere and Connor reached Patriot houses, they shouted: "The regulars are coming out". They managed to reach Adams and Hancock before the British troops entered Lexington. In doing so, they prevented the colonists from being massacred and helped them repel the British advances. Revere thus helped the Patriot side in what would be the first military confrontation of the Revolutionary War.

Forty years after his death, the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote "Paul Revere's Ride", cementing Revere's place in popular mythology. However, in contrast to popular legends and myths, Revere never made it to Concord. During the night, he was captured by the British in Lexington. Moreover, Revere actually raced on horseback along with Sons of Liberty members William Dawes and Dr. Samuel Prescott. Of the three, only Prescott made it to Concord, while it was Revere who was remembered for the ride. Longfellow's poem does not mention either Dawes or Prescott.

3 : E : 2
#A

HAYTHAM KENWAY

Haytham Kenway (1725 – 1781) was a Templar who mostly operated in British North America during the second part of the eighteenth century. Haytham grew up in London, England, in a wealthy family composed of his father Edward, his mother, and his half-sister Jenny. He spent his childhood in a mansion in Queen Anne's Square, which stood in sharp contrast to the poverty, filth, and disease-filled environment of most of the city.

Haytham learned at a young age that his condition separated him from the rest of the children. He grew up isolated from almost any contact with children his age. Through limited interactions with his neighbors and through the behavior of the people around him, Haytham understood that there was something particular about his family that set them apart, and that his family could not be considered "normal".

Despite knowing very little about his father's past endeavors, Haytham idolized Edward, who was a very secret man. When Haytham turned eight years old, his father brought him, his mother, and Jenny to the White's Chocolate House on Chesterfield Street where he met a man named Reginald Birch, with whom his father appeared to be well acquainted. At the evening spent at the club, Mr. Birch appeared to court Haytham's half-sister.

Reginald soon became a regular visitor to the Kenways' house, although Jenny did not seem to appreciate his company. Birch enquired about Haytham's sword training under his father's instruction and became quite interested in the family's affairs, demonstrating a clear intention to marry Haytham's half-sister.

Several days after hearing a dispute between his father and Mr. Birch, Haytham found blood in the kitchen and discovered the bodies of the soldiers who were hired by his father as guards to protect the mansion from robbery. His immediate reaction was to attempt to reach his parents only to find that masked men were fighting his father. Just as one of them was about to slit his mother's throat, Haytham grabbed a sword from a fallen intruder and put it through the attacker's eye socket. Unfortunately, Haytham could not save his father; the thieves killed him and took Jenny

hostage before setting the mansion on fire. Haytham and Mr. Birch looked on helplessly.

As Haytham's mother was shaken by the events, Reginald Birch was now making decisions for the family and became Haytham's guardian. Birch then revealed to Haytham that he was a Templar Knight, but immediately made clear that Edward was not one of them. Reginald promised to take care of Haytham and his family. He planned to go to Europe where he believed Jenny was being held. Haytham was surprised that Mr. Birch was going to take him along.

After leaving London, Haytham and Mr. Birch traveled throughout Europe, surrounded by Templar members. Over the years, Haytham immersed himself in Templar education, which was different from his father's curriculum of old schoolbooks and the freedom to question almost everything. Haytham realized that Reginald had a definitive worldview with strict teachings.

Haytham was an excellent pupil, and emerged as a legend across Europe. After performing several crucial missions for the Order over the years, he found himself at the Royal Opera House in London, on April 12, 1754. His target was a familiar Assassin, and Haytham killed him with his newly acquired hidden blade, before taking the amulet that was worn around his victim's neck.

After studying the amulet carefully, the Templars concluded that it was some kind of key that would open a storehouse built by Those Who Came Before. Templar calculations concluded that the precursor site was located on the east coast of North America. Haytham was then dispatched to the colonies to find the hidden Temple and to establish a Templar guild in North America.

Haytham arrived at the Boston Harbor in 1754 and was welcomed by Charles Lee, who quickly became his second-in-command and best disciple. Haytham's ambitious nature and his dedication to the Templar cause led to his rapid involvement in colonial affairs. With Lee's help, he gathered a number of individuals willing to work under his wing to establish a firm Templar reign in North America. Haytham saw the colonies as a well of limitless resources and potential. His new surroundings fed his personal ambitions and he set out on a quest to dominate North America.

Haytham's influence on the British colonies expanded quickly and set him on the right path to locate the First Civilization site. Haytham's information pointed him towards the Mohawk Valley. Haytham and his Templar partners then built up a network of connections within the *Kanien'kehá:ka* populations. The Templar even freed some *Kanien'kehá:ka* prisoners from British captivity in order to strengthen their friendship with them.

Haytham's involvement with the Native populations introduced him to Kaniehtí:io, a *Kanien'kehá:ka* woman who guided him to the precursor site, which was sacred to her village. They joined forces to eliminate Haytham's former Templar associate, British General Edward Braddock. Haytham and Braddock had cooperated in many Templar missions, but Braddock's loss of control and actions on the battlefield drove them apart. Haytham resolved the situation by assassinating him.

Haytham and Kaniehtí:io's cooperation brought them closer together and they conceived a child. Soon after, she discovered his connections to the Templars and his desire to use the First Civilization Temple to create a New World Order based on Templar interests. Kaniehtí:io kept the knowledge of their child a secret, and ordered Haytham to leave.

Following his disappointment at being unable to open the First Civilization cave with his amulet, added to his loss of contact with the *Kanien'kehá:ka* population, Haytham decided to abandon his quest to find First Civilization clues and secret rooms in order to focus on taking control of the colonies.

At the end of the Seven Years War, Haytham's power had grown substantially. His reach and influence were unchallenged until 1770, where he met a boy who was eerily familiar to him. Their first meeting revealed the vast difference in their views. Through their following encounters, Haytham made it clear that the Templars were not allies to the British. However, he and his son, Connor, had different views on how to help over the colonies gain independence from the British Crown. Haytham despised George Washington, the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army, favoring his Templar ally Charles Lee. Haytham perceived Washington as weak and insincere, and pushed for Charles Lee as the prominent figure of the colonies.

Despite their disagreements over tactics and who should lead the colonies, Haytham willingly cooperated with his son on several occasions to achieve his goals. They worked together to eliminate Benjamin Church, who betrayed the Templar Order and defected to the British side. For a little while, Connor carried the hope that he could convince his father to change, while Haytham tried to influence his son, and to highlight Washington's weakness and inability to lead the colonies towards independence.

However, even if they shared similar goals as far as independence was concerned, their devotion to the philosophies of their respective Orders quickly resurfaced. Haytham's continued support for Charles Lee proved to be unacceptable to Connor, and in the end, they could not agree over the leadership of the colonies or reconcile their two separate visions of humanity's destiny. Father and son confronted each other in a final showdown in the Templar headquarters in Fort George, New York.

3 : E : 2
#B

CHARLES LEE

Charles Lee (1732 - 1782) was an English born soldier who served under the British Army during the Seven Years War in North America. During that period, he joined the Templar Order under its master, Haytham Kenway. While still a young man, Lee introduced Haytham to the city of Boston, and served under him throughout the Revolutionary Era.

The Templar Master in London, Reginald Birch, provided Haytham with a list of influential men to recruit who would become key members of the North American Order. Haytham entrusted Lee to find the people on the list. Lee quickly became a devoted servant to the Templar cause, and rose through its ranks to become Haytham's right-hand man.

His service with the British troops during the Seven Years War under General Edward Braddock proved to be an obstacle to his participation in Templar affairs. He was constantly torn between his duties to the Order and to the army, but his opposition to Braddock's ruthless tactics and authority were constant.

The Templars saw in Lee what was needed in order to secure power in the colonies. They sought to impose their vision in North America, and chose Lee to lead them towards their ultimate goal of controlling this new land. Imbued with a sense of purpose and accomplishment, Lee wanted desperately to live up to the confidence that the Templars placed in him, dedicating himself to his mission.

Lee was engaged in various conflicts during the Seven Years War, including campaigns in Canada. In 1758, he was wounded in a battle against the French at Fort Ticonderoga.

During this time, he was assigned to the Mohawk Valley region where he made important connections with various indigenous groups, even going so far as to marry the daughter of a *Kanien'kehá:ka* chief. However, these new alliances did not prevent him from engaging in military maneuvers against Native populations. Lee was active in several campaigns intended to seize control of their lands. It was during these operations that he first encountered a half-native boy named Ratonhnhaké:ton – later known as Connor. It appeared that Lee was involved in the destruction of many indigenous settlements, including Connor's home village.

After his engagement in North America, Lee returned to Europe to fight in Portugal and Poland. Once back in Great Britain, the Templars directed Lee towards the British colonies once again where the colonists were clashing with the British authorities. In 1773, he moved to Virginia, and when war with Great Britain was about to break out, he volunteered to serve for the colonies. With his vast experience and military achievements, Lee expected, with full Templar support, to be appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army.

The Templars schemed to secure Lee's position, but a last minute turn of events reversed his fortune. Haytham was convinced that Lee was the best man for the job and the most obvious candidate for Congress, but in the end, George Washington was appointed to the position. In fact, most people were shocked by the appointment, including the Assassins who thought it was all but over. However, Lee was unable to rally enough support to secure the position for himself, and incapable of devising political maneuvers to this end.

Lee's frustration at being passed over for command lingered through the entire revolutionary conflict. Following Washington's nomination, the Templar plan was ruined. Lee was openly hostile towards Washington on a number of occasions, and went so far as to start a letter campaign in the hope of convincing the members of Congress to replace the Assassin-backed Washington as Commander-in-Chief.

Lee then struck back at the Assassins by focusing his efforts on Connor. He managed to arrest and imprison Connor, falsely accusing him of being involved in a conspiracy to assassinate George Washington. With the help of his mentor Achilles, Connor was able to escape his execution.

Despite Lee's opposition to the Commander-in-Chief, he was still one of the more senior military officers of the Continental Army and was given numerous responsibilities. After being involved in the Siege of Boston, Lee was sent south to defend Charleston, South Carolina. After a few months there, he started back to New York but was captured by a British patrol. In May of 1778, he was sent back to the Continental Army in exchange for Richard Prescott, a British officer.

During that period, Connor attempted to warn the Patriots about Lee's association with the Templar Order, but was held back by his mentor Achilles. At Valley Forge, in the winter of 1777, George Washington simply refused to believe Connor's assumption regarding Lee's efforts to weaken the Patriot operations.

In June of 1778, Lee was involved in the Battle of Monmouth, where Washington placed him in charge of a frontal assault against the British. However, Lee appeared to have no plan of attack. On June 28, Lee went against Washington's commandment and ordered a retreat in the middle of a battle in which he offered little resistance to the British Army. This enraged Connor, who had long warned of Lee's machinations against the Patriots. In the aftermath of the battle, Lee was arrested, charged with insubordination - for verbal abuse against Washington - and court-martialed for his actions.

Despite his failure to eliminate Connor and to take control of the Revolutionary War, Lee remained committed to the Templar Order. After Connor murdered his master, Haytham, Lee vowed to avenge his death and continue the fight against the Brotherhood. He also promised Connor that he would destroy him and his homeland, but he would not live to fulfill his promises. Connor chased down Lee in the Boston shipyard and, on October 2, 1782, finally caught up with him in a Philadelphia tavern, and killed him.

3 : E : 2
#C

BENJAMIN CHURCH

Benjamin Church (1734 - 1778) was the Surgeon General of the Continental Army's Medical Service. Under Haytham Kenway, Church became an important member of the Templar Order. His quest for money and his perceived role of working for the public good made him a great resource for the Templar Order. Therefore, when Haytham approached him with the promise of helping hopeless humanity through the intelligence and structure of the organization, he jumped at the opportunity.

Church treated some of the wounded following the Boston Massacre of March 1770. His public service continued for several years and in 1774, Church was elected to the Massachusetts Provincial Congress. Soon afterwards, he was tasked with participating in the preparations for a potential armed conflict with Great Britain.

However, Church's patriotism would come into question when, in 1775, he was taken prisoner by British troops after the Battle of Lexington. It appeared that his relationship with British General Thomas Gage was a voluntary one and that Church was establishing communications with the British of his own free will.

His position during the early part of the revolution remained ambiguous. His patriotism seemed spirited and sincere at the beginning of the war. However, his greed and his conviction to serve the public interest pushed him towards acts that were detrimental to the Patriot cause, such as providing information to the British. When confronted by the Patriots about his allegiances, Church insisted and claimed that his communications with the Loyalists were intended to gain information for the Patriots.

His actions did not confirm his alleged positions. One of the tactics he utilized was the destruction of lines of communication between Patriot camps. As the Surgeon General of the Continental Army, Church had access to a large stock of medical supplies, but was not distributing them properly. Consequently, his activities had a major impact on the Patriot troops' condition.

The Templars believed that Church's actions were a ploy to destabilize the foundation of colonial leadership in order to facilitate the Order's control of the

region. They soon found out that Church was in fact selling the medical supplies directly to the British to line his own pockets, thereby not only affecting the Patriot cause, but also betraying the Templars.

However, his greed was not his only motivation, as he came to believe that the British authorities were more able than the American Patriots to improve the lives of the colonists. Church saw himself as a servant of the greater good for the public by helping the British side.

In October 1775, the Patriots discovered his secret correspondence with British General Gage. Church had written a letter in cypher to a British officer in Boston, which contained detailed accounts of the Continental Army as well as the fact that he had been negotiating the capture of George Washington. He was subsequently expelled from the Massachusetts Congress, charged with holding traitorous correspondence with the enemy, and was sent to a Connecticut jail, although he was released a few months later.

After being released from prison, Church found himself hunted by the Assassins and the Templars alike. Connor and Haytham joined forces in order to eliminate him. They intercepted Church on his way to Martinique, where Connor assassinated him in the middle of an epic battle on the Atlantic Ocean.

> AFTER THE BRITISH EXPELLED GEORGE WASHINGTON'S FORCES OFF MANHATTAN IN 1776, SEVERAL THOUSAND LOYALISTS ARRIVED IN NEW YORK CITY

3 : E : 2
#D

LOYALISTS

The colonists who chose to remain faithful to Great Britain during the American Revolution were called Loyalists, or Tories. It is estimated that they made up twenty percent of the entire population of the British North American colonies. They opposed the Patriot quest for independence and did not get involved in any colonial efforts that were designed to sever ties with Great Britain. They saw themselves as British citizens with the same rights as those living back in Great Britain.

The majority of Loyalists did not approve the 1765 Stamp Act and the 1774 Coercive Acts implemented by the British Parliament on colonial America because the Loyalists favored limited governmental involvement in economic and political affairs. However, they did not commit themselves to revolutionary activities because they feared the unknown elements that would bring a separation with Great Britain. The Loyalists asserted that severing ties with the mother country would lead to despotism and anarchy, and that the colonies would be unable to support themselves entirely as an independent nation.

Despite their loyalty to their mother country, few Loyalists served on the battlefield. However, some contributed to the British cause by committing various acts of sabotage, such as disrupting Patriot lines of communication. During the conflict, some Loyalist groups worked for the Templar Benjamin Church.

At the end of the war, when the Patriot victory appeared inevitable, approximately eighty thousand Loyalists fled to Canada and other parts of the British Empire. Even if most of them did not serve in the military confrontations, their presence illustrates the diversity of voices to be found within British colonial America.

3 : E : 2
#E

WILLIAM JOHNSON

William Johnson (1715 – 1774) was born in Ireland, but settled in America in 1738 at the age of twenty-three. He converted to Protestantism and managed an estate purchased by his uncle before buying his own plot of land near *Kanien'kehá:ka* territory. Johnson developed a close relationship with his *Kanien'kehá:ka* neighbors and was appointed British agent to the Iroquois. His military and diplomatic career evolved alongside his relationships with the Native populations. Throughout his life in America, his specific role was to keep close connections with the indigenous populations, to pursue British diplomatic, economic, and military interests in the region, and more importantly to extend the Order's influence.

In 1756, he was appointed British Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the northern colonies, with a major part of his duty devoted to negotiations with Native populations. During the Seven Years War, he acted as a diplomat and worked to convince indigenous groups to side with the British instead of the French, but his true motivation was to bring the Native populations under Templar control.

His close work with the Native populations made Johnson an extremely precious resource to the Templar Order. His knowledge of the geographical and political landscape was crucial in the Templar's quest for the precursor site. Johnson pursued his research throughout the frontier in order to find clues that might have been left by Those Who Came Before.

His relationship with indigenous populations allowed him to prosper as a merchant and trader, frequently doing business with the indigenous peoples. Ironically, these transactions gave him the funds to buy lands and to push Native settlements westward. His priority was to acquire lands belonging to the Iroquois Confederation, by force if necessary.

The Assassins believed they had put an end to his ventures by destroying the tea cargoes during the Boston Tea Party of 1773, which deprived Johnson of the funds needed to buy land, including the village of the half-native Assassin Connor. Despite losing that revenue, the Templars' extensive financial reserves still allowed Johnson to buy the land. Ultimately, Connor was able to prevent the purchase by murdering him before he could complete the transaction.

3 : E : 2
#F

THOMAS HICKEY

Thomas Hickey (unknown - 1776) was a member of the Templar Order and a Continental Army soldier during the American Revolution. He was a key member in expeditions to find a First Civilization hidden Temple. Hickey assisted fellow Templar William Johnson in operations to find stolen research that contained information about the potential location of the precursor site.

His enterprises with the Templars appeared to be of a financial nature, rather than an ideological one. Hickey was a known figure in the network of thieves around Boston and this proved to be a valuable asset for the Templars, one which they exploited to gather information about the hidden Temple.

Hickey participated in the Revolutionary War in various capacities. He began fighting with the Patriots on the front lines and rose through the ranks to become one of George Washington's personal guards. He also managed the finances of the Continental Army and kept the Commander-in-Chief's official records, which gave him access to Washington and knowledge of the Army's operations.

However, Hickey's Templar activities were uncovered. While in New York, Hickey was caught with a large sack of money and accused of counterfeiting. He was arrested and sent to Bridewall Prison.

Despite beliefs that he would soon be freed by his Templar comrades, Hickey was kept in jail while under investigation for plotting to assassinate George Washington. Despite various accounts depicting Hickey a Loyalist, he was simply a Templar devoted to eliminating George Washington in order to replace him with his Templar comrade Charles Lee as commander of the Continental Army. Hickey was accused of conspiring to murder Washington in New York during the summer of 1776.

His friends in the Templar Order finally managed to free him by shifting the blame to the Assassin Connor, who was put up for execution in Hickey's place. Connor was freed just minutes before his scheduled death. He managed to catch up with Hickey just as he was attempting to take Washington's life. On June 28, 1776, Connor assassinated Hickey.

3 : E : 2
#G

JOHN PITCAIRN

John Pitcairn (1722 – 1755) was a British soldier assigned to the Massachusetts region during the early stages of the revolutionary conflict in the North American territory. Pitcairn was also an important member of the Templar Order. He was close to Master Haytham Kenway and was part of the operations to gather information related to the First Civilization Temple.

In December 1774, he arrived in Boston with approximately six hundred British Marines to occupy the city and restore order. In April 1775, he and British General Thomas Gage gave orders to locate and destroy Patriot weapons, ammunitions, and supplies in Concord, a town near Boston. However, Pitcairn also wanted to reach Samuel Adams and John Hancock, two important Patriot activists, who had taken shelter in the town of Lexington. Though he was unsuccessful in finding his targets and in destroying supplies in Concord, Pitcairn was able to sabotage Patriot weapon stockpiles in the region.

The Assassin Connor was aware of Pitcairn's involvement with the Templars and the British Army, which threatened his activities in support of the Patriot cause. In order to stop the Templar's progress in Boston, Connor decided to infiltrate Pitcairn's camp.

Pitcairn was a key figure in early military confrontations around Boston. In July 1775, while the Patriots and British soldiers exchanged gunfire on Bunker Hill and Breed's Hill, Connor seized his opportunity to eliminate him. Connor made his way into Pitcairn's camp on Moulton Hill and delivered the fatal blow.

Until his last breath, Pitcairn denied to have planned to eliminate Adams and Hancock in Lexington. During his encounters with the colonists, he claimed to have pursued a path of discussions and negotiations in order to avoid more violent confrontations between the colonists and the British authorities.

3 : E : 2
#H

NICHOLAS BIDDLE

Nicholas Biddle (1750 – 1778) was a talented and experienced sailor who became a captain of the Continental Navy when the first naval conflicts broke out between the colonial and British forces.

Biddle was an independent sailor, who worked under contract with the Continental Navy. Due to a lack of funding and resources,

Congress relied on private vessels in order to conduct naval operations. Biddle was using his own fleet to patrol English shipping lanes, attacking any threat and keeping a percentage of the spoils, all in the name of American independence.

The fact that Biddle was essentially a pirate, bent on profit rather than military glory, made him ripe for Templar Haytham's missions. Haytham tailored his hook to Biddle's tendencies, promising to appoint him Admiral of the Continental Navy. This Templar support allowed him unchallenged reign over American waters and unfettered control over the distribution of the subsequent profits. Biddle had the freedom to intercept any kind of ship. He provided a much needed naval arm to Haytham's reach. He would act as ferry for important people when needed, and flexed the full might of his fiercely loyal crew whenever Haytham asked. Otherwise, Biddle would stalk the Atlantic Ocean and prey on any vessel he thought worthwhile.

Biddle's activities with the Templars caught the attention of the Assassin Brotherhood. The Assassin Connor captained a ship named the Aquila and set out to stop his pirating, which was obstructing the Assassins' progress. As Biddle navigated towards the Caribbean aboard his vessel the Randolph, he encountered Connor's ship. After a furious naval battle, Connor killed Biddle and the Randolph was blown up in a spectacular explosion.

3 : E : 2
#I

EDWARD BRADDOCK

General Edward Braddock (1695 – 1755) was a British soldier, appointed Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in North America in 1754, just before the Seven Years War (1756 – 1763). Braddock had been an acolyte of Haytham Kenway and a member of the Templar Order. However, they were driven apart by Braddock's abrasive personality and his uncompromising attitude in battle that offered no mercy to enemies, soldiers, or civilians. His decisions and behavior on the battlefield led Haytham to despise him, despite their past glory as Templar members.

As part of his preparations for military expeditions to seize lands from the French and Natives by driving them westward, Braddock asked for volunteers, promising land and wealth to colonial farmers and workers. George Washington served as a volunteer officer under Braddock, which took them to the Monongahela River.

This gave Haytham a chance to plot the perfect ambush with his ally Kaniehtí:io, a *Kanien'kehá:ka* woman who also sought to eliminate Braddock. French and Native troops emerged from Fort Duquesne and attacked Braddock's convoy. In July of 1775, Haytham and Kaniehtí:io managed to kill Braddock during the Battle of Monongahela.

3 F

AVELINE DE GRANDPRÉ

1767 - unknown

Aveline de Grandpré (1747 – unknown) was born in New Orleans to Philippe Olivier de Grandpré, a French merchant, and Jeanne, an African slave. Granted her freedom at birth along with her mother, Aveline grew up in a privileged environment. When her father married Madeleine de L'Isle in 1752, both Aveline and her mother stayed with them, but five years later Jeanne vanished, leaving a void in Aveline's life.

Even as a child, Aveline noticed the prevailing contradictions of her city, where freedom and slavery evolved side by side. Over the years, she absorbed the details and nuances of New Orleans' social, economic, and political structure, eventually gaining profound insight into the subtleties of this complex, diversified society.

When she was twelve years old, Aveline took it upon herself to rescue a slave, but was caught by the sailors employed by the slave's owner. Agaté, an Assassin from Saint-Domingue, intervened, rescuing Aveline and helping her free the man. Believing that her commitment to freedom and justice was beyond compare, Agaté recruited Aveline into the Assassin Brotherhood in 1759.

From then on, using her charm, cunning, and combat skills—as well as her eagle sense—Aveline sought to help people in need, and devoted her life to rid Louisiana of the Templars. A social chameleon, Aveline could appear as either a slave or a distinguished lady in dress, manner and speech. This meant that she could infiltrate slave traders' organizations and smugglers' networks just as easily as she could mingle with nobles or government officials.

In 1765, Aveline's investigations into smuggling and slave trading operations provided her with a link between the Templars and the highest governmental authorities. She discovered that the Templar Rafael Joaquín de Ferrer was involved in slave trading enterprises in collusion with the Louisiana's French governor, Jean-Jacques Blaise d'Abbadie. Both were working for someone called the "Company Man", the head Templar in Louisiana. Aveline subsequently killed the governor, but found no trace of de Ferrer or the Company Man.

› A YOUNG AVELINE

In 1766, on Agaté's orders, Aveline searched the bayou for a man pretending to be François Mackandal, whose true name she later learned was Baptiste. This false Mackandal was plotting to seize control of the bayou, poison the French nobles of New Orleans, and force Agaté out of hiding. Aveline neutralized his followers and killed him. She not only learned that Baptiste was working for de Ferrer, but also that he knew both Agaté and her mother. However, when Aveline returned to Agaté, she kept this knowledge to herself, not fully trusting her mentor, who had hidden this connection from her.

> AVELINE AS A LADY

> AVELINE IN VOODOO ATTIRE

During the Louisiana Rebellion of 1768, Aveline discovered that slaves and vagrants were disappearing again. She forced Governor Antonio de Ulloa, a Templar, to come to New Orleans where she ambushed him. However, instead of killing him as Agaté had ordered, she chose to spare his life. Before fleeing from New Orleans, de Ulloa gave her a lens that would allow her to decipher coded Templar messages. He also informed her that slaves from New Orleans had been taken south to Mexico.

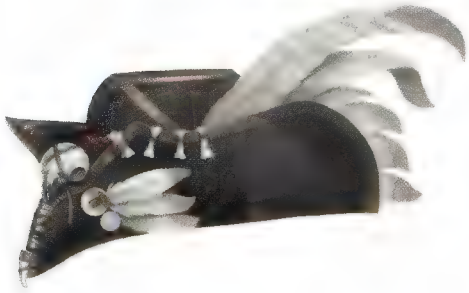
This act of mercy further damaged her relationship with her mentor. Against Agaté's explicit wishes, Aveline left New Orleans and traveled to Chichén Itzá, hoping to shed light on this mysterious slave trafficking operation. While in Chichén Itzá, she not only killed de Ferrer and uncovered a fragment of a Prophecy Disk—a First Civilization artifact, but also found her long-lost mother, Jeanne. The reunion, however, was a bitter one. Realizing that her daughter was an Assassin, and fearing for her life, Jeanne fled.

Aveline returned home and continued to search for the mysterious Company Man, who she now believed was called Vázquez. After preventing soldiers under his employ from taking control of the bayou, Aveline hurried back to Chichén Itzá, where she made peace with her mother and found a second fragment of the Prophecy Disk.

In 1776, her father took ill, but Aveline continued her search for the Company Man. At the request of her stepmother, Madeleine, Aveline helped an

escaped slave by the name of George flee north. While escorting him through the bayou, she also helped her smuggler allies deliver supplies to American patriots, and eventually learned that Vázquez was back in New Orleans. Later on, Aveline attended a *soirée* at the governor's mansion, where she identified Vázquez, lured him into a quiet corner, and stabbed him. Unfortunately, Vázquez was not the Company Man. That same evening, her father passed away.

During the winter of 1777, the Assassins learned that a man calling himself Officer Davidson was actually a Templar working for the so-called Company Man. Desperate to unmask the head Templar, Aveline set out for New York to hunt down Davidson. With the aid of Connor, a fellow Assassin, she tracked the Templar down, only to realize that Davidson and George—the slave she had helped escape north—were one and the same. From him, she finally learned the identity of the Company Man: Madeleine de L'Isle, her own stepmother.



› VOODOO HAT

As soon as she returned to New Orleans, Aveline confronted Madeleine, who tried to convince her to join the Templar Order. Shortly afterward, she visited Agaté to inform him of the situation, and to persuade him to leave Louisiana for his own safety. Unable to admit his failings, and believing that Aveline had sided with Madeleine, Agaté attacked her. In the end, however, he would plunge to his death.

Aveline handed Agaté's necklace to Madeleine as proof of her mentor's passing. She was then inducted in the Templar Order, and gave the two halves of the Prophecy Disk to Madeleine. This, however, was merely a ruse to infiltrate the Templars and eradicate the Order from within. Aveline finally assassinated Madeleine and reclaimed all the fragments of the Prophecy Disk.

FRIENDS & ALLIES

3 : F : 1
#A

AGATÉ

Agaté (c. 1722 – 1777) was born on the western coast of Africa. When he was only seven years old, he was captured, enslaved, and brought to America. Upon arrival in Saint-Domingue, Agaté met Jeanne, another African slave captured around the same time. In 1732, Agaté was introduced to the Assassin François Mackandal, who took him, along with Jeanne and Baptiste, a fellow slave, under his wing. Mackandal taught his *protégés* how to read and write, and soon began to train Agaté and Baptiste to wield weapons and craft poison.

In 1738, Agaté officially joined the Assassin Brotherhood, before escaping from the Saint-Domingue plantation with Mackandal and Baptiste, leaving Jeanne behind. He kept in touch with Jeanne and even tried to convince her to join the Assassins, but she refused. He eventually cut off all ties with her for the good of the Brotherhood.

Agaté fought alongside Mackandal for many years until Mackandal's execution in 1758. He then traveled to New Orleans in search of Jeanne, who had been sold years earlier to a merchant named Philippe Olivier de Grandpré. By then, however, Jeanne had been released from slavery and had left Louisiana.

When he found out that Jeanne had given birth to a daughter, Aveline, who was still living in New Orleans, Agaté decided to remain there and keep a close eye on her. When she was twelve years old, Aveline attempted to rescue a slave, but was caught. Agaté promptly intervened, saved her life, and helped her free the man. Soon afterward, he inducted her into the Assassin Brotherhood.

By this time, Agaté had become more of a mentor than a warrior for the Assassins. A wanted man, he went into hiding deep in the bayou, as far away from the Templars as possible, using Aveline as his agent in New Orleans. In 1766, however, relations with his pupil became strained after Aveline discovered from Baptiste—who had come to Louisiana pretending to

be Mackandal—that Agaté and her mother Jeanne had known each other.

In 1768, Aveline disobeyed Agaté's order to assassinate Louisiana governor Antonio de Ulloa, whereupon his trust in her was shattered. Aveline then traveled to Chichén Itzá on her own initiative, causing further distance between them. In the years that followed, the two of them grew apart.

When Aveline unmasked her stepmother, Madeleine de L'Isle, as the head of the Templar Order in Louisiana, Agaté was unable to accept his wrongdoing and his failure to protect his mentee. Refusing to leave New Orleans, and believing that Aveline had sided with the Templars, he chose to dive to his death rather than live with the humiliation.

3 : F : 1
#B

JEANNE

Jeanne (c. 1725 – unknown) was born in Africa. When she was about five years old, she was captured by slavers, brought to America, and sold to a plantation owner in Saint-Domingue, where she met Agaté, Baptiste, and François Mackandal. Though the latter treated her with kindness and taught her to read and write, she became fearful of his violent ways. Unbeknown to anyone, Jeanne stole something from him—a fragment of a First Civilization artifact she dubbed the "Heart". When Agaté and Baptiste later joined the Assassin Brotherhood, she refused to follow them.

In 1738, Agaté left with Baptiste and Mackandal, and soon cut all ties with her. Six years later, Jeanne was sold to Philippe Olivier de Grandpré, a merchant, who brought her to New Orleans. She became his *placée* and, in 1747, their daughter Aveline was born. Philippe granted Jeanne and Aveline their freedom. However, Philippe's marriage to Madeleine de L'Isle in 1752 put a strain on their relationship, even though they were allowed to stay at de Grandpré's mansion, and despite the fact that Aveline had received the best education.

In 1757, fearing that the Assassins would come to New Orleans to seek the Heart she had stolen, Jeanne accepted Madeleine's offer to go south to Mexico, not realizing that she had been manipulated. She did not tell anyone where she was going, not even her daughter, whom she left in Madeleine's care. It was later revealed that Jeanne had given the Heart to Aveline, hidden in the form of a handcrafted locket.

> GÉRALD BLANC

> PHILIPPE OLIVIER DE GRANDPRÉ

3 : F : 1
#C

GÉRALD BLANC

Born in Acadia, Gérald Blanc (1745 – unknown) migrated to New Orleans in 1755, and almost immediately began to work for Philippe Olivier de Grandpré. He became a close friend to Aveline and, in 1759, Agaté recruited him as a spy and informant for the Brotherhood. As the years went by, Gérald was entrusted with greater responsibilities, eventually becoming Philippe's accountant. He served the Assassin cause by developing and maintaining a network of informants, gathering intelligence for the Brotherhood, and passing on Agaté's orders to Aveline.

3 : F : 1
#D

PHILIPPE OLIVIER DE GRANDPRÉ

Philippe Olivier de Grandpré (1722 – 1776) was born in France to a family of successful merchants. As a young man, he traveled to New Orleans in search of new business opportunities, and decided to settle there. In 1744, while on a trip to Saint-Domingue, he acquired Jeanne, a slave, and brought her to New Orleans. Three years later, they had a daughter, Aveline. Philippe freed Jeanne and she became his *placée*.

In 1752, Philippe married Madeleine de L'Isle. Jeanne continued to live in his household while Madeleine made certain that Aveline received the best education. When Jeanne mysteriously disappeared in 1757, Philippe was devastated, but remained confident that Madeleine would take good care of his daughter.

He died from a mysterious illness in 1776. It was later revealed that he had been poisoned by his wife after discovering her role as head of the Templar Order in Louisiana.

3 : F : 2
#A

MADELEINE DE L'ISLE

Madeleine de L'Isle (1732 – 1777) was a Templar member based in New Orleans, Louisiana. In 1752, she married Philippe Olivier de Grandpré, who already had a daughter from a previous union with a *placée* named Jeanne. Philippe hoped that the marriage would broaden his business network, while Madeleine was content to use the association to hide her Templar ambitions. Her secret identity remained unknown to her family.

Madeleine was particularly adroit at manipulating those around her, and making them work to achieve her goals. She spoke guardedly and was careful not to reveal herself through her actions or words. Madeleine noticed that her high-spirited stepdaughter Aveline showed great potential, and decided to groom her for membership in the Templar Order. In 1757, she arranged for Jeanne to leave New Orleans, promising to raise the girl as her own.

Once Madeleine began to suspect that Aveline had joined the Assassins, she took advantage of her stepdaughter's relationship with Agaté to subtly gain information about the Brotherhood's activities. This connection helped her to secure the leadership of the Templars in Louisiana. In 1764, after discovering proof that a First Civilization artifact was located in Chichén Itzá, Madeleine devised a plan to divert slaves and vagrants from New Orleans and elsewhere in the Caribbean, and to take them to Mexico. She entrusted this task to Rafael Joaquín de Ferrer, her right-hand man.

When her husband Philippe finally discovered her secret identity, she poisoned him. In 1777, Aveline realized that the "Company Man" she had been searching for was, in fact, her own stepmother. After a heated argument, Madeleine reasoned with her and Aveline agreed to join the Templar Order. However, it was merely a ruse to infiltrate the organization and eradicate it from within. Aveline later assassinated Madeleine and dealt a lethal blow to the Templars.

> ANTONIO DE ULLOA

3 : F : 2
#B

ANTONIO DE ULLOA

Antonio de Ulloa (1716 – 1795) was a Spanish General, respected and prominent scientist, and member of the Templar Order. In 1736, he took part in a scientific expedition to South America. In 1766, after decades of research and travel, he became the first Spanish governor of Louisiana. However, his short tenure was marked by unrest and discontent. The French colonists refused to recognize the Spanish occupation, openly challenging de Ulloa's authority and policies.

De Ulloa's service to the Templar Order was mainly as a scientific advisor, but in 1768, he plotted to kidnap slaves and vagrants in order to send them to the Chichén Itzá worksite. De Ulloa was later ambushed by Aveline de Grandpré, who had been ordered to kill him. Ultimately, she spared him and his pregnant wife in exchange for a lens to decipher secret Templar documents.

After his encounter with Aveline, de Ulloa fled New Orleans, although historical records state that he was expelled by the French Creoles during the Louisiana Rebellion of 1768. De Ulloa served as a naval officer until the end of his life.

3 : F : 2
#C

RAFAEL JOAQUÍN DE FERRER

Born in Spain, Rafael Joaquín de Ferrer (unknown – 1769) was a member of the Templar Order, and was Madeleine de L'Isle's most trusted agent. In 1764, she entrusted him with the task of uncovering the fabled Prophecy Disk—a First Civilization artifact—buried somewhere around Chichén Itzá. De Ferrer plotted with the Louisiana governor to secretly transfer slaves from New Orleans to the Mexican worksite, and later made a deal with ex-Assassin Baptiste to take control of smuggling operations in the Louisiana bayou, and to force Agaté, Aveline de Grandpré's mentor, out of hiding.

De Ferrer died in Mexico at the hands of the Assassin Aveline, shortly after she had discovered a fragment of the Prophecy Disk.

> RAFAEL JOAQUIN DE F

3 : F : 2
#D

BAPTISTE

Baptiste (1725 – 1766) was born on a slave plantation in Saint-Domingue, where he met Jeanne, Agaté, and François Mackandal. In 1738, he and Agaté joined Mackandal's Assassin Brotherhood and the three of them fled the plantation.

Baptiste and Agaté fought alongside Mackandal for many years until the latter was caught and executed in 1758. Agaté then left to search for Jeanne, the woman he had loved. Defeated and feeling betrayed, Baptiste left the Assassin Brotherhood and created his own Maroon secret society. He followed Mackandal's teachings, but adapted the principles, values, and actions to serve his own needs and vision.

In 1766, Baptiste traveled to New Orleans, where he made a deal with the Templars. By pretending to be the late François Mackandal, he attempted to take over smuggling operations in the bayou, and plotted to poison the nobles of New Orleans. His underlying goal, however, was to force Agaté out of hiding and deliver him to the Templar Rafael Joaquín de Ferrer.

Baptiste was about to put his plan into action when Aveline de Grandpré uncovered his scheme, neutralized his men, and killed him.

DANIEL CROSS

Born 1974

Daniel Cross (born 1974) was a late 20th century descendent of the Russian Assassin Nikolai Orelov. Plagued by hallucinations of his ancestor's memories, he became a criminal, as well as a drug addict and alcoholic. Daniel was instrumental in the assassination of the Mentor, the leading member of the modern-day Assassins, and the near-destruction of the Brotherhood in 2000.

Daniel Cross (born 1974) was a late 20th century descendent of the Russian Assassin Nikolai Orelov. Plagued by hallucinations of his ancestor's memories, he became a criminal, as well as a drug addict and alcoholic. Daniel was instrumental in the assassination of the Mentor, the leading member of the modern-day Assassins, and the near-destruction of the Brotherhood in 2000.

Abstergo Industries kidnapped Daniel at an early age. Under the designation Subject 4, his genetic memory was explored and his mind experimented upon by Warren Vidic. The latter implanted Daniel with a false identity and, most importantly, a single impulse: to locate the Mentor, and kill him.

The initial phase complete, Daniel was thrown out of the laboratory. A couple driving past found him, but the child could only answer in Russian. Haunted by visions of unknown people speaking in Russian—actually the genetic memories of his ancestor, Nikolai Orelov—Daniel eventually turned to drugs and alcohol. He grew violent and unstable, leading to at least one criminal conviction. After his release, he was ordered by the court to seek treatment, but grew to despise the mind-numbing effects of his medication. After an unpleasant confrontation with his psychiatrist in 1998, he threw the drugs away, embarking on a drinking binge in a bar. Without the medicine, Daniel's hallucinations grew unbearable—he witnessed his ancestor's attempt on the life of Tsar Alexander III, in 1888. Confused, he stumbled out into the street. When a bystander attempted to offer assistance, Daniel accused him of being a Templar and almost stabbed him. Hannah Mueller, a member of the Assassin Brotherhood, intervened, pulling him into a car and driving off.

Hannah believed Daniel to be an Assassin, like her, and was shocked to find that he had no real understanding of the Brotherhood or its enemies, despite having named them in the confrontation on the street. Daniel soon passed out, and when he awoke, he found himself in an Assassin training camp. Hannah took Daniel to the camp's director, Paul Bellamy, and they sought to understand who he was. They found no record of Daniel anywhere in the Assassins' personnel files, yet he had their symbol tattooed upon his wrist and clearly had hallucinations which concerned the Brotherhood. When Daniel had another vision and began to speak the words of his ancestor—including the name "Tunguska"— Paul pressed him for more information. Daniel reacted badly and turned to flee, but was held back by two Assassins. Within moments, Daniel had incapacitated both, forcing Bellamy to threaten him with his hidden blade in order to prevent a deadly altercation. Daniel was then taken back to his room while further investigations were carried out.

That same night, Daniel asked Hannah to let him go back to his apartment to recover his medication; she took him there, but discovered that he had already thrown away the last of his pills. As Daniel broke down, Hannah attempted to console him. They were interrupted by the sudden arrival of Paul, who had discovered from his superior, Bill Miles, that a team of Assassins had been sent to Tunguska in 1908, and that there had been a single survivor—

Daniel's great-grandfather, Nikolai Orelov. Upon mention of his ancestor's name, Daniel experienced another hallucination. When Paul tried to ascertain the content of the vision, Daniel knocked him down and fled, taking to the rooftops.

Paul and Hannah pursued, as Daniel continued to witness the events of the 1908 mission and their aftermath. Eventually the images overwhelmed him and he collapsed. But out of the chaos, Daniel suddenly found purpose. As Hannah caught up to him, Daniel revealed that he now knew what he must do: seek out the Mentor.

For two years, Daniel traveled across the planet in search of the elusive Mentor. He visited every Assassin facility he could find and sought help from every corner. Eventually his search drew attention and, in November 2000, two men broke into his apartment and sedated him. The next morning, Daniel woke up to find himself in Dubai, in the presence of the one he had been looking for.

The Mentor told Daniel that his visions had made him a subject of interest for quite some time. He hoped to formally induct Daniel into the Order, and even, perhaps to eventually succeed him as Mentor. He presented Daniel with his own hidden blade, stating that though mainly ceremonial, such weapons were still effective. Daniel put it on, triggering his implanted impulse. Daniel plunged his blade into the Mentor's throat, killing him. He was immediately overwhelmed by guilt and confusion. Hearing voices outside the room, Daniel dived out of the window into the sea.

Lost and alone, Daniel eventually made his way back to Abstergo, where he divulged detailed information on the locations of Assassins' hideouts. Daniel asked only to be allowed to return to the Animus. Exploring the memories of his ancestors, he was finally able to find solace by fleeing reality and the consequences of his actions. With the information Daniel had provided, Abstergo initiated what they dubbed the Great Purge, driving the Assassins to the point of near extinction.

After fourteen months inside the Animus, Dr. Sung monitored uncontrollable brain activity and ordered the machine to be shut down. Daniel woke up, and despite the prolonged exposure in the Animus, did not suffer any neurological damage. Thanks to information he took from the Mentor, the Great Purge was a huge success. His achievements were thoroughly noticed by Abstergo employees.

His precarious condition made it difficult to adapt to his post-Animus life. Daniel developed intense visions where he experienced the memories of his grandfather, Innokenti Orelov – also known as Kenya, reliving the attempts to arrest his ancestor's family during the Parlmer Raids of the 1920s. Soon afterwards, Cross witnessed Kenya's escape with his father Nikolai, and their subsequent life in the remote wilderness of the United States, hidden from the Assassin Brotherhood.

A couple of weeks after being removed from the Animus, Daniel's health drastically improved. He took his medication and was better able to cope with the Bleeding Effect, a consequence of his long term exposure to the machine. Daniel became a model Templar instructing new recruits to prepare for future confrontations with the Assassin Brotherhood. He grew comfortable in his new position and enjoyed his work.

However, the Templar Order had other plans for him. Daniel was assigned a mission based on the wealth of information they had acquired over the past two years. He needed to infiltrate the library built by Ivan the Terrible under Moscow's Bolshoi Theater. The Templars believed that the library was used by generations of Assassin leaders as a special repository of artifacts and secret information.

Daniel accessed the library through a series of tunnel underneath the theater. The Assassin guard inside mistook Daniel for his replacement, which granted him access to the Assassin's archive without attracting any suspicion. He also found Ezio Auditore's journals that chronicled his many travels. However, the most precious information brought back to the Templars concerned information about a certain Desmond. These clues represented a major breakthrough for the Templars.

Daniel's next mission was to stop Desmond who was considered detrimental to the Order. Abstergo Industries tracked Desmond's movements while Dr. Warren Vidic established that Desmond was searching for some kind of power source. The Templars sent Daniel to Manhattan not only to prevent Desmond from finding these sources, but also to take the Apple of Eden from him. He tracked Desmond to a penthouse that contained a power source, but Desmond escaped with the device. Daniel was immediately sent to Brazil to prevent Desmond from collecting a second battery.

Daniel's efforts were in vain, as Desmond left Brazil in possession of another power source. Soon afterwards, his mental condition worsened and he returned to Abstergo facilities, as only the Animus could temper the pain.

Desmond arrived at the Abstergo compound in Italy to rescue his father who had been taken by Dr. Vidic. Cross attacked Desmond near the building's elevators and they battled through the rooms and the corridors. During the fight, Daniel experienced intolerable pain, clutching his head and stumbling. Desmond seized the opportunity and killed Daniel with his hidden blade, ending his misery.

CROSS

FRIENDS & ALLIES

3 : G : 1
#A

HANNAH MUELLER

A modern day Assassin, Hannah Mueller was responsible for the discovery and introduction of Daniel Cross—a Templar sleeper agent—into the Brotherhood, in 1998. Like most of her fellow Assassins, Hannah was born into the Brotherhood, though the nature of her work was mostly non-violent, as she specialized in computer technology and intelligence.

Hannah discovered Daniel Cross late one night, while investigating a commotion outside Amy's Coop, a Philadelphia nightclub. Daniel, drunk and hallucinating, was brandishing a knife and threatening a passerby. Hannah, mistaking Daniel for a reckless Assassin, stole him away from the scene and delivered him to a secret Assassin training camp located near the city.

While initially appalled by his self-destructive behavior, Hannah grew sympathetic to Daniel's condition. She helped him escape the complex and eventually became his confidante. Hannah's influence was one of the primary reasons behind Daniel's gradual reform and induction into the Brotherhood. Over the next two years, she was one of the few Assassins who remained by Daniel's side during his search for the elusive Mentor.

Despite their close relationship, Hannah was unable to predict the true nature of Daniel's mission—and never suspected he would kill the Mentor.

3 : G : 1
#B

PAUL BELLAMY

Paul Bellamy was the director of the Assassin training camp near Philadelphia and one of the first Assassins to come into contact with Daniel Cross. As the director, he had authority over many of the Assassins stationed nearby, including Hannah Mueller. Outside of his administrative capacity, Paul was also a skilled combatant and wore a hidden blade.

Paul was suspicious toward Daniel since their first encounter at the training camp. A round of questioning soon turned violent as Daniel, having one of his violent hallucinatory episodes, attacked nearby recruits. Paul subdued him and had Daniel isolated. During this time, he became increasingly interested in Daniel's condition. He was one of the first to deduce the nature of his hallucinations as episodes of ancestral memory, and believed Daniel possessed a key to understanding the Assassins' past.

Although he never shared Hannah's implicit trust in Daniel, Paul was sincere in his desire to reform him. Daniel's treachery shook the foundation of the entire Brotherhood, however. Immediately following the death of the Mentor, Paul ordered the evacuation of the Philadelphia training camp.

3 : G : 1
#C

THE MENTOR

Prior to the 20th century, the title of Mentor was given to any Assassin leader who had achieved an extraordinary level of skill and wisdom, and who had taken on apprentices of his own. During the 20th century, this title was made official and singular. Now one of the highest positions of authority within the Assassin Brotherhood, the Mentor was now charged with passing on all the accumulated knowledge of his or her predecessors from one generation to the next.

By the end of the 20th century, the Assassin hierarchy had broken down to such an extent that the existence of the Mentor became largely a matter of speculation, and many Assassins believed he was no more than a myth born out of misinterpretation of the Assassin hierarchy. Those who believed in the Mentor considered him a strategic genius, guiding the Brotherhood from behind the secrecy of his own mystique. All mentors believed in promoting harmony through free will, including the last. From his complex in Dubai, he monitored and coordinated the movements of the Brotherhood in order to help maintain a balance of power in the world.

In November of 2000, the Mentor believed he had found his next worthy apprentice, a young man named Daniel Cross. He invited Daniel to his secret complex, sharing with him the inner workings of the Brotherhood. As a gesture of his formal induction into the Brotherhood, the Mentor gave Daniel his own ceremonial hidden blade. Unknown to either of them, this act triggered a Templar directive embedded in Daniel's subconscious; he unwittingly assassinated the Mentor before fleeing Dubai.

3 H

NIKOLAI ORELOV

Late 19th

Born in the late 19th century, Nikolai Orelov was a member of the Russian branch of the Assassin Brotherhood, which operated behind the terrorist organization *Narodnaya Volya* ("The People's Will"). He was also great-grandfather to Daniel Cross.

Nikolai's father, an Assassin, trained his son from an early age in the ways of the Brotherhood. Through the Assassins, Nikolai met Vladimir Ulyanov (later known as Lenin) and his brother Alexander. When the latter was executed, in 1887, for an attempt on the life of Tsar Alexander III, an ally of the Templars, Nikolai was deeply affected and blamed himself for his friend's death.

By 1888, Nikolai was married to a woman called Anna, who was expecting their first child. In October of that year, he was sent on a mission to assassinate Tsar Alexander III, an ally of the Templars, as he journeyed from Crimea to St. Petersburg by train. Nikolai successfully boarded the imperial train but it derailed, causing him to fail in his mission. After the train crashed, the Tsar overpowered Nikolai, though the latter chose to spare his life. In the process, Nikolai discovered that Alexander was in possession of the Staff of Eden, a powerful artifact—and vowed to reclaim it.

Twenty years later Nikolai still sought the Staff. He was offered the opportunity to find it when the Assassins captured a Templar named Dolinsky. Nikolai had grown bitter by the loss of his child, which had occurred several years earlier, and he brutally tortured Dolinsky for information. It was eventually revealed that the Staff was being experimented on, in Tunguska, Siberia, using technology stolen from Nikola Tesla.

The Assassins decided to destroy the Staff and Tesla agreed to help them. In 1908, Nikolai led a party of Assassins in an assault on the Siberian facility while Tesla, from his laboratory in America, activated a powerful electrical weapon. The force destroyed the Staff, creating an enormous explosion. Nikolai was the only survivor.

In 1917, during the Bolshevik Revolution, Vladimir Lenin asked Nikolai to eliminate Tsar Nicholas II. Nikolai had no desire to kill the Tsar, but suspected that he had somehow recovered the Staff of Eden—though it had been destroyed, in 1908. He soon discovered that Nicholas possessed only a replica, and chose to spare his life. However, the Tsar did reveal that Grigori Rasputin, his now-deceased advisor, had kept a tiny shard of the original Staff around his neck.

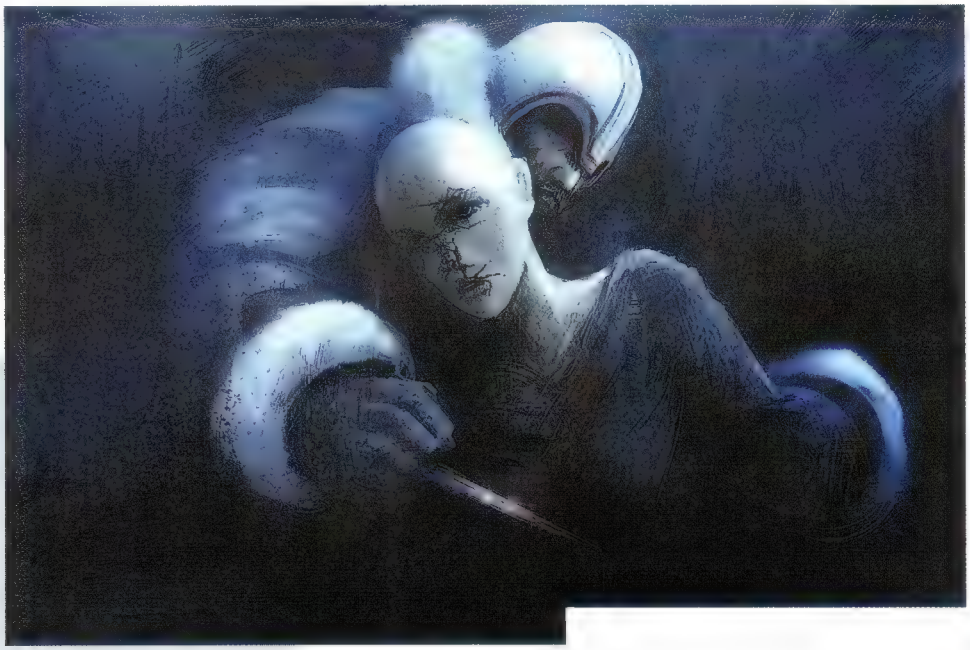
Nikolai later dug up Rasputin's grave and reclaimed the fragment. Soon afterwards, with his wife Anna and their second child, Nikolai headed to America, along with the artifact.

Nikolai and Anna had another child, who they named Innokenti – also known as Kenya. Their family was soon torn apart, as Anna and their daughter Nadya were arrested during the Palmer Raids, an attempt by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer to arrest and deport alleged radical leftists. Nikolai and his son managed to avoid capture, but the authorities took his wife and daughter. For two years, he attempted to find them without success. He never saw them again.

Nikolai heard rumors that they were put on a ship to Finland, but that the Finnish soldiers had probably shot them. Other information suggested that they were deported back to Russia, but fell ill and did not survive the trip. Yet another theory speculated that the Brotherhood took care of Anna and Nadya, relocating them to Russia where Nadya married and had a child of her own.

Nikolai and Kenya lived a secluded life in the American wilderness, away from civilization. However, the location of their hideout was discovered by the Brotherhood and an Assassin was sent to reclaim Nikolai and the fragment he possessed.

Nikolai murdered the man, but he knew that more Assassins would arrive to reclaim the important object in his possession. He tried to teach Kenya how defend himself, knowing that the Brotherhood would be coming after them. Soon after, a team of Assassin attempted to capture them. While escaping through the woods, Nikolai was severely injured. In an attempt to end his suffering, Kenya delivered the killing blow, then took his father's hidden blade and hood and left on his own.



3 : H : 1
#A

ANNA ORELOV

Anna Orelov was the wife of the Russian Assassin Nikolai Orelov, and the great-grandmother of Daniel Cross. In 1888, Anna was several months pregnant with her first child, but unfortunately the child eventually died. The death was a grievous blow to the Orelov family.

Sometime before the 1917 Russian Revolution, Anna gave birth to a daughter. Anna and her daughter were with Nikolai when he exhumed the body of Grigori Rasputin. Shortly thereafter, the Orelov family left the turmoil of revolutionary Russia behind and Anna and her child traveled with Nikolai to the United States of America.

Anna was aware that her husband was an Assassin, and also knew about the work of the Brotherhood. As Nikolai's spouse, she provided him with solace and emotional stability even amidst his self-inflicted guilt over his perceived shortcomings as an Assassin.

After settling in the United States of America, Anna gave birth to another child. However, while her husband fought U.S. officials in the Palmer Raids, Anna and her daughter Nadya were arrested under the Sedition Act of 1918.

After the arrest, no trace of Anna was found. It was rumoured that prisoners were taken to Finland, although it is believed that Anna and her daughter were taken back to Russia, where Nadya survived, got married, and had a child of her own.

3 : H : 1
#B

INNOKENTI ORELOV

Grandfather of Daniel Cross and son of Nikolai and Anna Orelov, Innokenti Orelov – also known as Kenya – was born in the United States of America. His parents left Russia after his father distanced himself from the Assassin Brotherhood, who believed that Nikolai had fled possessing something that belonged to them.

Kenya was separated from his mother Anna and his sister Nadya when he was just a baby after they were arrested during the Palmer Raids, brought about by the Sedition Act of 1918 and the Red Scare of the 1920s.

Kenya and his father were able to escape in the woods, and lived away from contact with people. After an attack conducted by the Assassins, his father taught him to defend himself, preparing him for the day when the Assassin Brotherhood would come back. The harsh life he shared with his father became even more severe when a group of Assassins finally came and attacked them. Kenya and his father eliminated some of the Assassins before fleeing deeper into the woods. His father was ultimately captured and in a final stand of, was killed by his own son to end his suffering. Kenya was able to retrieve his father's hidden blade and hood before making his final escape and leaving on his own.

3 : H : 1
#C

NIKOLA TESLA

Nikola Tesla (1856 - 1943) was an inventor, scientist and electrical engineer. Born a Serbian in the Austrian Empire, Tesla discovered an Apple of Eden in what is modern day Croatia. Possession of the Apple gave him access to incredible knowledge and the relic's information was the source of many of his inventions. As an inventor in America, Tesla pioneered numerous scientific breakthroughs, including AC currents, remote control, wireless communication and his famous Tesla coils. In the course of his work, Tesla undertook a large scale project to prove his theories concerning wireless communication and transmission of energy. The project culminated in the construction of Wardenclyffe Tower. Wardenclyffe was the start of Tesla's plan to create a global energy and information network that would provide free power and communication to the world.

By 1903, Tesla had gained the attention of the Templar Thomas Edison, who successfully discredited him, cut his funding and took possession of the Apple of Eden. Five years later, Tesla was contacted by the Assassins, who required his aid to deal with a Templar copy of the Wardenclyffe tower that had been built in Tunguska. Though his original project had appeared to be unfinished, Telsa's tower contained a powerful particle beam weapon that he called the Teleforce. On June 30, 1908, Tesla targeted the Templar tower and activated the Teleforce, which released a blast of energy that destroyed the facility. However, Edison's slander campaign would leave a lasting mark on Tesla's career. By the end of his life, Tesla was considered a mad scientist and his global power network never saw fruition. Nikola Tesla died alone in his room at the New Yorker Hotel.

ENEMIES

3 : H : 2
#A

TSAR ALEXANDER III

One of the last Tsars of Russia, Alexander III (1845 - 1894) came into power in 1881, following the death of his father at the hands of the Russian Assassin Brotherhood. During his reign, he was a constant threat to the Assassins operating behind the terrorist group *Narodnaya Volya* ("The People's Will").

Alexander strongly believed in centralized power. He thought of himself as a medieval autocrat; a quality his son Nicholas II would greatly admire. As an ally of the Templars and head of one of the leading European powers, Alexander was entrusted with the Staff of Eden, popularized in the image of the Russian Imperial Scepter. Alexander's implacable ambition to transform the Russian Empire into a new Eden beneath the autocratic rule of the House of Romanov motivated the Assassins to move against him.

On October 29, 1888, Alexander and his family were returning to St. Petersburg following a retreat in Crimea. The Brotherhood dispatched one of their own—Nikolai Orelov—to infiltrate the imperial train and eliminate the Tsar. However, the train suffered a violent derailment during the attack, thus preventing the assassination. Alexander then overpowered Nikolai, but spared his life.

During his reign, Tsar Alexander III repressed the emergence of populist movements and maintained the authority of the imperial family. The Brotherhood's efforts to instigate political reform were largely unsuccessful during his lifetime.

3 : H : 2
#B

TSAR NICHOLAS II

The last Tsar of Russia, Nicholas II (1868 - 1918) was a symbol of the dying Russian autocracy. His reign was defined by his inability to adapt to his nation's rapid industrialization, which inevitably led to the violent supplanting of the Tsardom by Bolshevik party leader and Assassin sympathizer Vladimir Lenin.

Nicholas became Tsar after the death of his father, Alexander III. Nicholas idolized his father, whom he believed a man of great personal strength and regal authority. As Tsar, Nicholas' political views were shaped largely by his admiration of his father, but also colored by the constant violence to which he was exposed: he lived to watch his grandfather, Alexander II, bleed to death following a bombing by the *Narodnaya Volya*, and survived the Borki Train Disaster of 1888, during which his father overpowered the Assassin Nikolai Orelov.

On June 30, 1908, the Assassins destroyed the Staff of Eden in a massive detonation in Tunguska, Siberia. Without the Staff, the power of the Tsar began to atrophy. The Assassins, eager to replace the autocratic Tsardom with a populist government, helped fan the flames of a revolution against which Nicholas was ultimately powerless.

With pressure from the Assassins, Nicholas formally abdicated in 1917, after which the Romanov family was placed under house arrest. Ultimately, however, even the Assassins would lose control over the Revolution. In 1918, the Romanov family was relocated to Ekaterinburg and executed.

3 : H : 2
#C

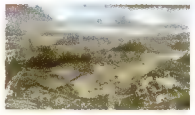
GRIGORI RASPUTIN

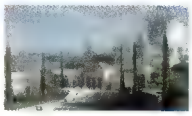
Grigori Rasputin (1869 - 1916) was a controversial figure in the court of Tsar Nicholas II, infamous for his powerful influence over the Romanov family and his alleged mystic abilities. In truth, Rasputin's power was largely borrowed from a shard of the Staff of Eden.

Rasputin was born to a relatively comfortable peasant family in Pokrovskoye, Siberia. Owing to his cult-like status, details of Rasputin's early life are distorted by rumors; nonetheless, he likely attended the nearby Verkhoturye Monastery, where he began to develop his persona as a mystic and visionary.

Rasputin's arrival in St. Petersburg, in 1905, marked the beginning of his journey to the center of the Romanov court and Russian politics. Though he had cultivated a reputation as an eccentric holy man, it was not until his acquisition of a shard from the Staff of Eden that Rasputin's power became legendary. A mere fragment of the Staff gave Rasputin an almost irresistible charisma. This, along with his miraculous healing of young Alexei Romanov's hemophilia earned him the admiration of the Tsarina.

Regarded as a symbol of Tsarist decadence, Rasputin eventually became a target for assassination. In December 1916, conspirators led by Felix Yusupov poisoned, stabbed, shot and drowned Rasputin in the Neva River. His corpse was later exhumed by Assassin Nikolai Orelov in order to retrieve the fragment of the Staff of Eden.





PLACES

PART # 4

› LEAP OF FAITH

4
#1

MASYAF

Located in the Orontes Valley in Western Syria, Masyaf was the headquarters of the Assassin Brotherhood in the Levant. Masyaf's proximity to Jerusalem, Acre and Damascus made it the natural center of Assassin influence in the region; its high walls were a brazen declaration of Assassin presence, repelling both Saracen and Crusader invaders.

In the late 11th century, Assassin leader Hassan-i Sabbāh began a campaign to publicize the Brotherhood's activities, making it a visible political force in the region. The citadel of Masyaf allowed the Brotherhood to extend its network of agents, informants and spies throughout the Levant. By the Third Crusade, Masyaf had solidified into the political, cultural and geographical center of the Assassins.

A training ground, an impenetrable fortress, a garden filled with exotic pleasures, a vast library, a base of operations for the Brotherhood—Masyaf was all of these to the public eye. Yet the public's perception of the citadel represented an incomplete picture. The citadel and its inhabitants were intentionally isolated. Clandestine Assassin training rituals became the subject of rumor, carefully cultivated by the Brotherhood in order to surround Masyaf in mystique. In truth, life within the walls of Masyaf was militant, controlled and rigid. Assassins were born, not recruited, and trained from an early age to obey the Creed.

The year 1191 was a tumultuous one for Masyaf and its inhabitants. The Crusader commander Robert de Sable laid siege to the city. Though the siege was unsuccessful, in that same year Assassin leader Al Mualim betrayed the Brotherhood and briefly seized control of Masyaf using the power of the Apple of Eden. His defeat at the hands of Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad marked a turning point in Assassin ideology. When Altaïr assumed leadership, the Assassins gave up many of the rituals upheld by Al Mualim. Altaïr then attempted to transform Masyaf into a place of learning and healing, opening the fortress' doors to recruits from around the world.

4
#2

JERUSALEM

Situated in the hills of the Judean Mountains, Jerusalem lies in the heart of Israel between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea. It is among the oldest cities in the world and has endured a long and eventful history.

The city is of great religious importance to the three major Abrahamic faiths, Judaism, Islam and Christianity. These religions consider Jerusalem to be a Holy City and its very name, translated from Hebrew, means "City of Peace". Regardless, Jerusalem has seen a great deal of conflict, and over the course of its history it has been assaulted, besieged, destroyed, captured and recaptured many times. Thus Jerusalem's layout and architecture have changed radically over the centuries, and the influence of both warfare and religion have left their mark on the city.

Jerusalem is fraught with landmarks of historical and religious significance. Among these is the Christian Church of the Holy Sepulcher, founded circa 326 CE by Queen Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine I. It was built, destroyed and rebuilt multiple times, namely by Crusaders during their occupation of Jerusalem, in the 12th century.

An equally stunning structure is the Dome of the Rock, one of the holiest sites of the Islamic faith, which was completed, in 691 CE, on the Temple Mount. When Crusader forces captured Jerusalem, in 1099, the Dome was turned into a church and renamed Templum Domini. It served as headquarters of the Knights Templar until the city was recaptured by Saladin, in 1187.

Beneath the Temple Mount lie the ancient ruins of Solomon's Temple. Believed to have been built circa 950 BCE, the First Temple, as it was called, was erected on Mount Moriah by King Solomon. Underneath it is a secret, underground chamber, which predates the temple itself. Built by Those Who Came Before, this secret vault held an Apple of Eden. In 1191 CE, this vault (and the Apple within it) was discovered by Templar Robert de Sable, as well as by Assassin Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad and the brothers Malik and Kadar A-Sayf.

4
#3

DAMASCUS

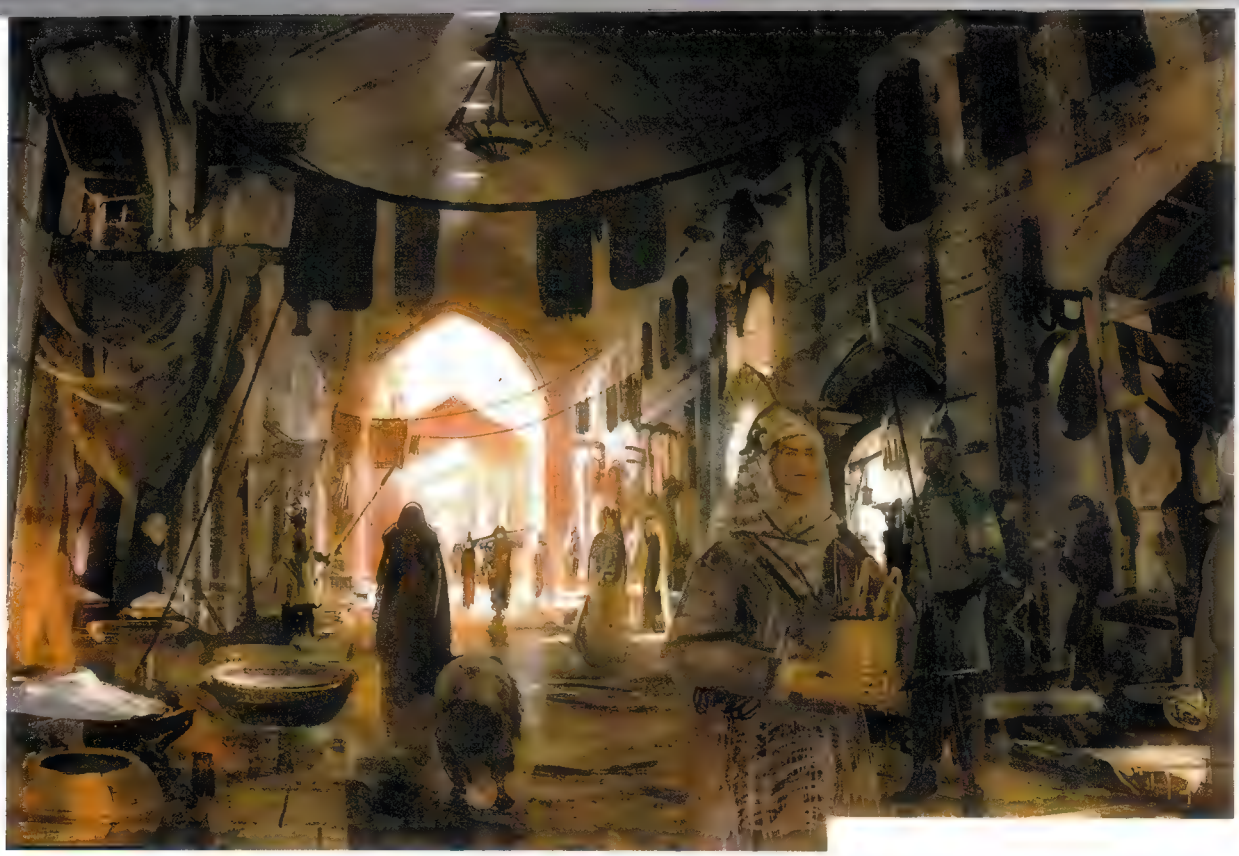
The capital of ancient Syria, Damascus is said to be the oldest continuously populated city in the world. Damascus lies in the eastern foothills of the Eastern Lebanon Mountain Range and is believed to have been founded during the 3rd millennium BCE. Its location near the delta of the Barada River has allowed the city to flourish since ancient times. A center of culture, Damascus has been a crossroads for the Middle East, serving as a terminal for the western end of the Silk Road. During its long history, it has fallen under the rule of many great empires, including the Babylonians, the Persians, the Macedonians, and the Romans. In 636 CE, the city was conquered by Khālid ibn al-Walīd and became part of the Muslim-Arab world.

A key feature of Damascus was the city's souks. These large market districts served as centers of trade in ancient Damascus, and continue to do so today. The Souk Sarouja

was once known as the largest bazaar in the city and the Souk Al-Silaah, an expansive trade center in its own right, was at one time controlled by the Templar Tamir.

Perhaps the most stunning landmark in Damascus is the Umayyad Mosque. Built by Khalid ibn al-Walid in 715 CE, the Grand Mosque of Damascus, as it is also called, numbers among the holiest sites of the Muslim world. It sits atop the ruins of the Roman Temple of Jupiter and the Christian Basilica of John the Baptist. The Mosque holds the tomb of Saladin as well as the remains of John the Baptist.

The Assassin Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad visited Damascus several times between 1190 and 1191. During his visits, he assassinated a number of Templar agents, namely Alaat, Tamir, Abu'l Nuqoud and Jubair al Hakïm.



4
#4

ACRE

The city of Acre sits in Western Galilee, in the northern region of Israel. A major port city at the northern end of Haifa Bay, Acre has long been a strategic gateway to the region. During the 12th century, Crusaders and Saracens constantly vied over the city. Thus it suffered an eventful history as the outcomes of sieges and invasions caused it to change hands repeatedly.

The various occupations of Acre left their mark on its architecture, as each group that at one time held the city built large additions in the form of fortifications, churches and castles. Such additions include the massive wall protecting Acre from the mainland and the Hospitalier compound, a series of great halls erected by the Order of the Hospital of St. John. Save for a brief occupation by Saracen forces between 1187 and 1191, this compound remained the headquarters of the Knights Hospitalier for nearly 200 years.

One of the largest landmarks in Acre is the Cathedral of the Holy Cross. Originally a mosque, it became the largest Crusader church in Acre. The cross at the top of its steeple was one of the highest scalable points in the city.

In 1190 and 1191, Assassins and Templars fought a secret war in Acre. During that time, Altaïr Ibn-La'Ahad was ordered to assassinate several members of the Templar Order, including William of Montferrat, who had betrayed his liege, Richard I of England.

4
#5

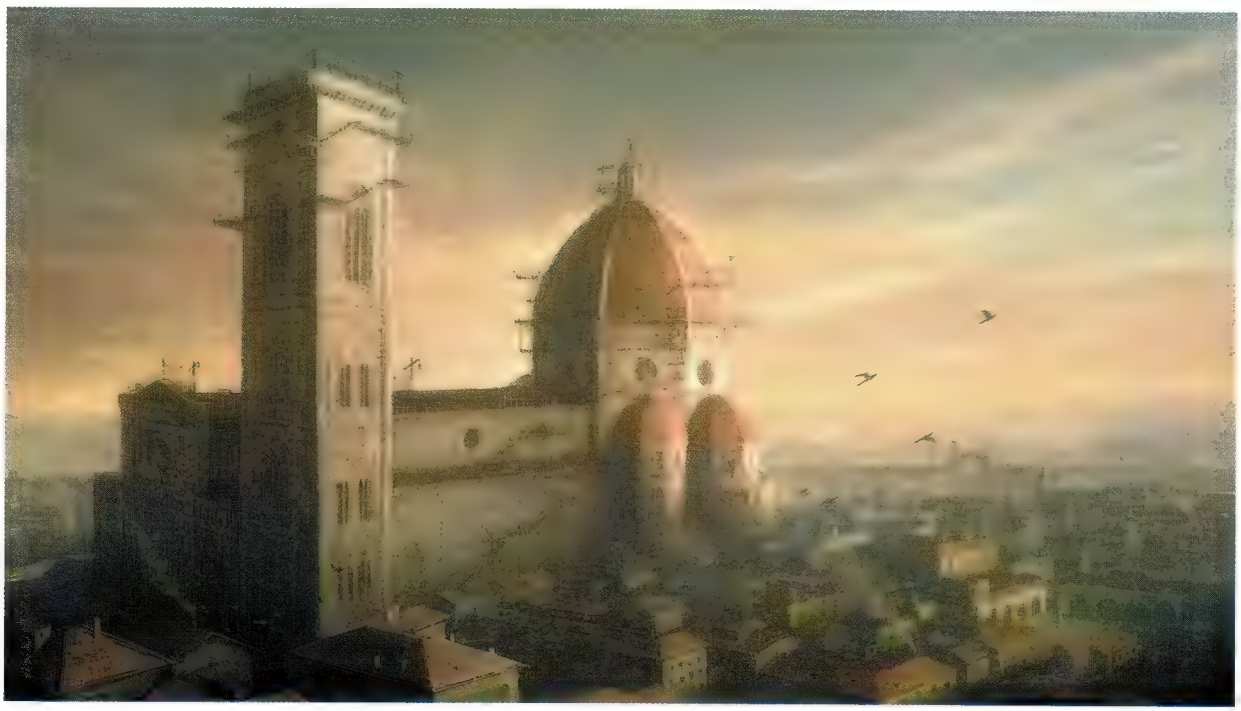
FLORENCE

Founded circa 80 BCE, Florence quickly grew from a small Roman settlement to a bustling commercial center. Built on fertile land and located on a major trade route between Rome and northern Italy, Florence endured a period of instability after the fall of the Empire, as Ostrogoths and Byzantines fought for control of the region. However, the city began to flourish once again under Lombard rule in the 7th century, and continued to thrive under Charlemagne a century later.

By the late medieval era, Florence had become an important trading and banking center, most notably known for its lucrative wool industry. In the mid-13th century, the city began to mint its own currency, the florin, and many notable banker families called Florence their home. This economic prosperity fostered the growth of mercantile guilds and attracted many immigrants. At the turn of the 15th century, Florence was one of the largest and most prosperous cities in Europe.

Florence, the home of artists such as Giotto, Dante and Donatello, became the cradle of the Italian Renaissance. Under the rule of the Medici family, Florentine culture continued to flourish, with Lorenzo de' Medici fostering arts, philosophy and scientific development. Michelangelo, Machiavelli, Botticelli, Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci, as well as the notable Auditore family and many others, continued this tradition. Thus the city maintained a well-earned reputation for innovation, until the 16th century.

Shortly after the death of Lorenzo de' Medici, however, the city fell under the control of Girolamo Savonarola, who used an Apple of Eden to sway its populace to his will. Fortunately, the Assassin Ezio Auditore liberated Florence's citizens in 1498, in the process reclaiming the Apple and killing Savonarola. Despite this brief period of instability, Florence remained a prosperous city throughout the Renaissance.

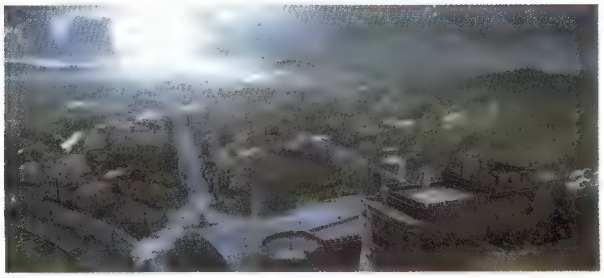


4
#6

ROME

Since its foundation, Rome has always been instrumental to the political, cultural and religious development of Europe. Between 509 BCE and 476 CE, the city was the capital of the Roman Republic and Empire. The original settlement consisted of a group of low ridges known as the Seven Hills, but Rome quickly grew to both sides of the Tiber River. As the Republic—and later the Empire—expanded, the city prospered and grew. Important landmarks, such as the Pantheon, the Colosseum, the Forum of Augustus, and the Markets of Trajan—to name a few—were built, becoming pro-eminent symbols of the city's affluence.

Following the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the Eternal City saw an important decline in its population as it fell alternately under Germanic and Byzantine control, remaining under the latter until 751. In 756, the Pope was given temporal jurisdiction over Rome, and the city became a major pilgrimage site in the Middle Ages. During the Renaissance, Rome became a pivotal battleground between Assassins and Templars.

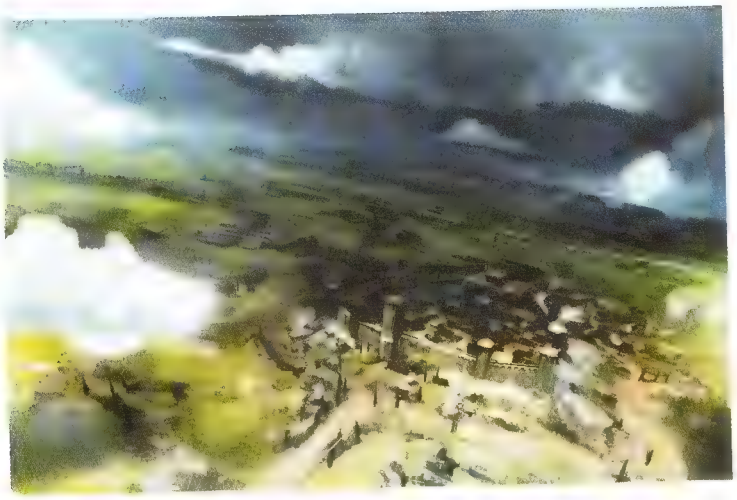


In 1492, the Templars took control of the Vaticano District when Rodrigo Borgia became Pope Alexander VI. However, the Templars were not motivated purely by political power; hidden beneath the *Cappella Sistina* ("Sistine Chapel") was a vault of the First Civilization. While Rodrigo Borgia failed to unlock the secrets of the vault, the Borgia family maintained a stranglehold on Rome, stifling growth and repressing economic development.

Between 1500 and 1503, the Assassin Brotherhood began a campaign to reclaim Rome from the Borgias. Capitalizing on the widespread rancor toward the ruling faction, the Assassins assisted the populace in deposing the Borgias and revitalizing their city, with the reclamation of Rome beginning in the Centro District. The Centro was the most populated of the four districts of Rome, and consequently the ideal location for the Assassins. Making their base on Tiber Island, the Assassins eventually claimed and renovated the *Rosa in Fiore*, a courtesan guildhall. The Assassins further established additional strongholds across the countryside: the *Caserma di Alviano* located in the Campagna District became the Brotherhood's military arm; *La Volpe Addormentata*, an inn in the Antico District, provided the Brotherhood with a steady source of dependable spies and intelligence.

4
#7

MONTERIGGIONI

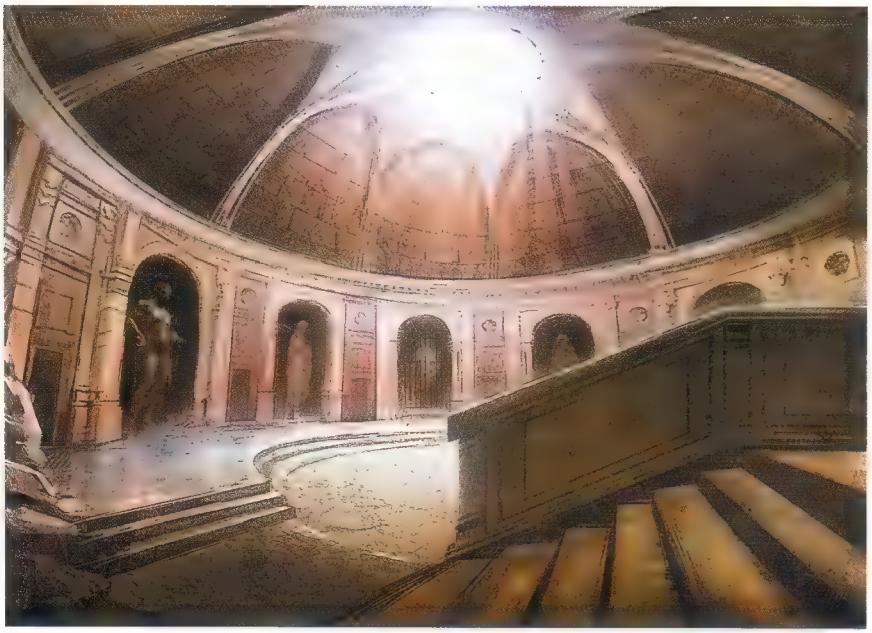


◆ CITY OF MONTERIGGIONI: PAST

Located in the Siena Province of Italy, Monteriggioni was a walled town built, in 1213, as a key strategic defense point in the wars against Florence's expansionist advance. During the 14th century, the city's well was drained, deepened and festooned with hidden traps in order to hide a Piece of Eden, known as the Shroud.

In 1454, Florence led an attack upon the city in order to retrieve this artifact, but failed—Mario Auditore, the city's new ruler and leader of the Assassin Brotherhood, had uncovered the Florentine intrigue targeting his city, and thus ensured that Monteriggioni would be able to withstand the attacks. He then led a team of soldiers deep underneath the city in order to find the Shroud and sent it far away under the care of his brother, Giovanni. Once this was done, Mario focused his efforts upon the war with the Templars once more. The neglect of the city's upkeep resulted in a significant loss of wealth and quality of life for its denizens, however.

Thankfully, the arrival of Ezio Auditore, in 1476, turned the tide—the young man invested heavily in the city, which prospered once more. Despite later attacks by the Templars, like Cesare Borgia's siege in



> THE SANCTUARY

1500, and a betrayal by the city's garrison keeper, which turned over the city to the Medici of Florence, Monteriggioni remained under the Auditore family's rule.

◆ VILLA AUDITORE

In 1290, the founder of the Auditor line, Domenico Auditore, purchased and renovated the Villa within the fortified city's walls. The Villa was specifically rebuilt to serve both as home and fortress for its inhabitants, and as such contained many hidden rooms and training areas. Domenico and his descendants would go on to use this location to lead their war against the Templars for several generations. Centuries later, while under Mario's care, the Villa's condition faltered, but with Ezio's arrival in the city things soon changed for the better.

◆ AUDITORE FAMILY CRYPT

The Auditore Family Crypt was built shortly after the Villa was renovated and later connected to it as an escape route, should the Villa fall to attackers. Domenico was interred within upon his death, and his and the origins of the Auditore family were depicted in the frescoes decorating the crypt's walls. Several members of later generations explored the crypt in the following centuries: Giovanni Auditore, Ezio Auditore and, finally, Desmond Miles. One had to pass through the Crypt in order to reach the Sanctuary.

◆ THE SANCTUARY

A vault located beneath the Villa Auditore, the Sanctuary, was built by Domenico during his time as ruler of the city. Within he placed seven statues in honor of some of the greatest Assassins of the Order.

→ AMUNET, born during the Ptolemaic Dynasty of Egypt, was responsible for the death of Cleopatra VII in 30 BCE

→ DÁRIUS, a Persian Assassin, killed Xerxes I in 465 BCE. His assassination was the earliest recorded mention of the Hidden Blade

→ ILTANI, a member of the Babylonian Assassin Brotherhood, dispatched Alexander the Great, who was using a Piece of Eden, known as the Staff, to conquer a large portion of Asia

→ LEONIUS stabbed Emperor Caligula, leader of the Roman Empire, in 41 CE

→ QULAN GAL was a Mongolian Assassin, who stood against the tyrant Genghis Khan. He and Altaïr's son were responsible for the warlord's death

→ WEI YU, a Chinese Assassin, killed Emperor Qin Shi Huang in 210 BCE

→ The last statue was that of ALTAÏR IBN-LA'AHAD, known for standing against the Templars and becoming the one who would institute vast and necessary changes throughout the Order

Though the sarcophagi of the legendary Assassins were later dispersed to other locations, the statues still remain within the Sanctuary to this day. The Sanctuary was used by Lucy Stillman and her team of Assassins in 2012 as a hiding place from the Templars pursuing them.

◆ CITY OF MONTERIGGIONI – PRESENT

Today, the city remains nearly untouched by time, having become a tourist attraction and a living representation of the Renaissance. Desmond's stay in the region held strange overtones, with several locations feeling eerily familiar to him due to his time in the Animus and synching with the memories of Ezio Auditore da Firenze.

4
#8

VENICE

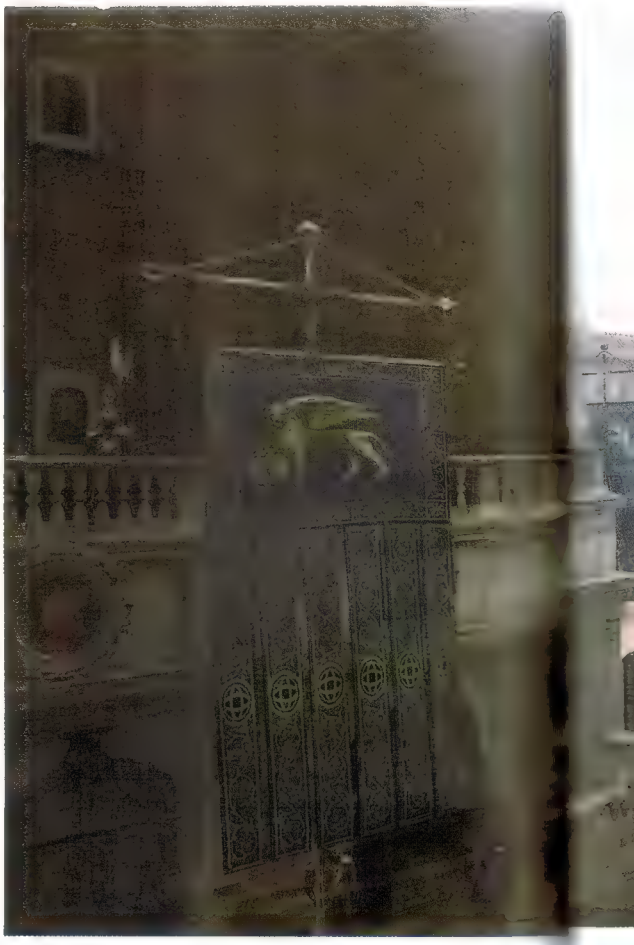
Situated in northern Italy, Venice was built upon a series of islands rising above a lagoon fed by the Adriatic. During the Renaissance, the city was the cultural, political and financial center of La Serenissima Republica di Venezia--the Serene Republic of Venice. Economic dominance coupled with a formidable navy made Venice an ideal stage for the machinations of both Templars and Assassins, who vied for control of the city.

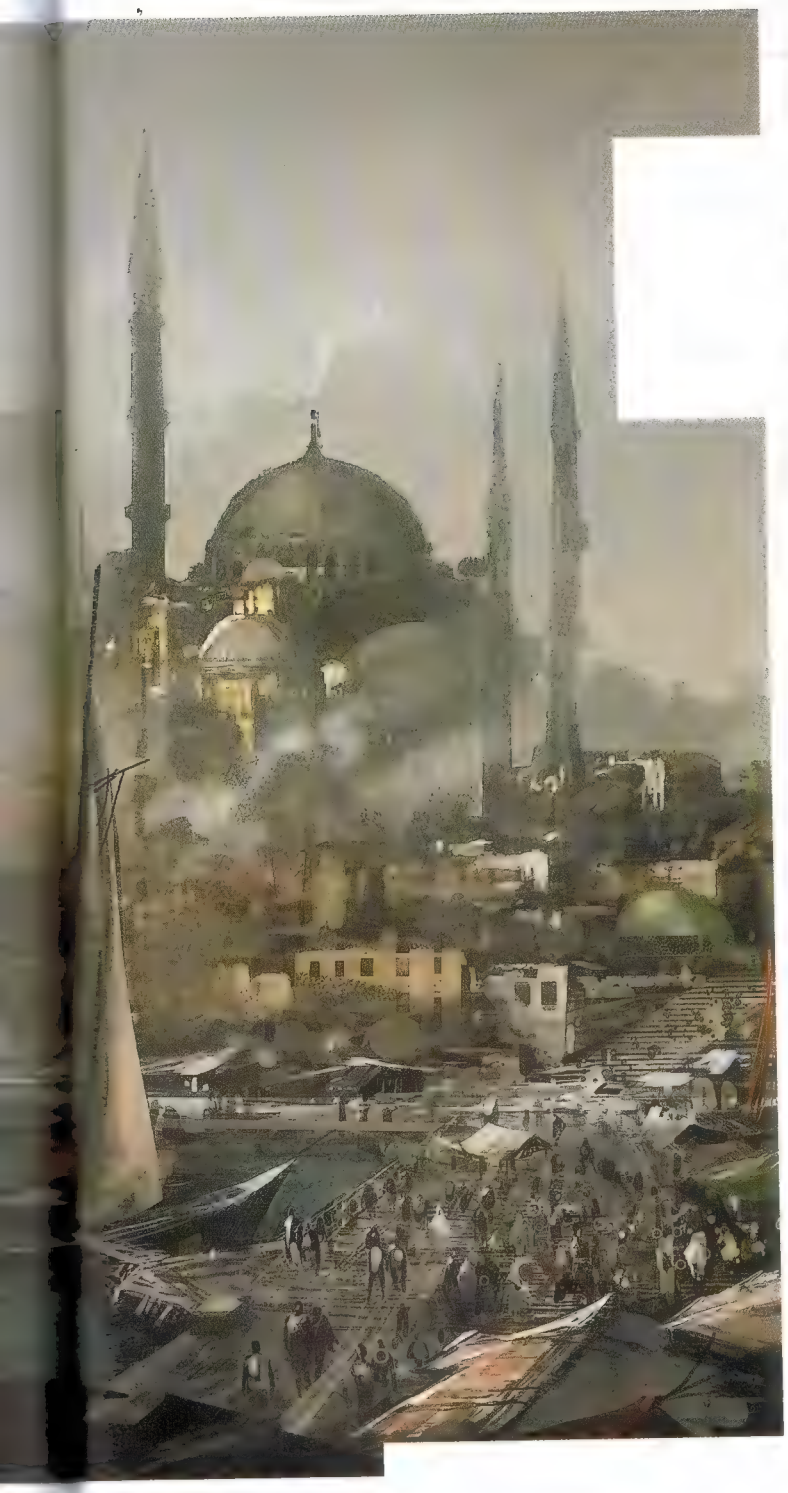
The Sestieri ("Six Districts") of Venice were built around particular landmarks and emerged in response to the changing political climate. The Castello District was the largest among the six, established around the second half of the 6th century CE, by settlers fleeing the Lombard invasions. When the Templars renovated L'Arsenale di Venezia ("Arsenal Shipyard") in 1320, the District grew around it. By this time, Venice was expanding in proportion to the Republic's growing economic and political influence across the world.

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries mark the height of Venetian power. In 1309, the city began construction of the Palazzo Ducale, the residence of the Doge of Venice and the heart of Venetian politics. Located in the San Marco District, far from the clerical influence of the San Pietro di Castello, the Palazzo Ducale was a symbol of the Doge's independence of Papal control. During the 15th century, the Palazzo Ducale became the stage for a series of violent conflicts between Assassins and Templars. In 1485, the Templars poisoned Doge Giovanni Mocenigo.

Mocenigo's death marked the beginning of a period of political instability, as Assassin and Templar agents struggled to control the Palazzo Ducale. The Templars replaced Mocenigo with one of their own: Marco Barbarigo, whose term as Doge lasted less than a year. In 1486, the Assassins killed Marco Barbarigo, replacing him in turn with his brother, Agostino. However, Agostino Barbarigo proved an unreliable ally, courting the favor of the Borgia family shortly after his rise to power. The Assassins had him poisoned, in 1501.

The sixteenth century marked the decline of Venetian political eminence. The League of Cambrai, comprised of France, Spain, the Hapsburgs and the Papacy, mobilized against Venice. In the spring of 1509, within the span of fifteen days, the League had defeated Venice at the Battle of Agnadello and conquered all its mainland territory.





4
#9

CONSTANTINOPLE

Kostantiniyye, Istanbul

Founded over the location of the Greek city of Byzantium circa 325-330 CE, Constantinople was located at the heart of the trading routes between Europe and Asia, with a harbor connecting to a seaway that merged into both the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Such an advantageous position also suited the city's founder, Emperor Constantine, in terms of the defensibility of the area. His selection was proven as wise centuries later—when the Visigoths and Huns invaded the Western Roman Empire, Constantinople remained unconquered, becoming the most important city in the Empire, as well as a symbol of Christianity.

In the mid-15th century, the city was captured by the Ottoman Turks, led by Sultan Mehmed II, signaling the end of the Eastern Roman Empire, as well as dealing a severe blow to Christendom. Many intellectuals who had resided in the city fled to Italy, a fact which some contend helped nurture the Renaissance.

Despite the decline triggered by the years of war it had undergone, Constantinople swiftly became the new capital of the Ottoman Empire. A long period of expansion ensued during the 15th and 16th centuries, with the Empire expanding aggressively into Europe and North Africa. Led by dedicated and efficient Sultans, the Empire prospered—a fact which inevitably drew the attention of the Templars. Assassin intervention prevented the Templars from gaining a serious foothold in the region, however, allowing the Ottoman dominion over its fate. Sultans Selim I and Suleiman the Magnificent stood out as leaders of the expansion. They were also responsible for the Empire's naval force becoming a power to be reckoned with. Beyond these military achievements, the socio-cultural and bureaucratic improvements introduced during their reigns were equally remarkable, being particularly notable for their consistent effectiveness.

There has been great controversy regarding the name of the city over the centuries. "Constantinople" was used for the duration of the Byzantine era and remained the most commonly used name in the West until the 20th century. Following Mehmed II's conquest, the Turks began calling the city Istanbul, which is also the modern Turkish name—though other traditional names are still preserved and used in many languages to this day, each indicating the reverence many cultures bear for the ancient city.

4
#10

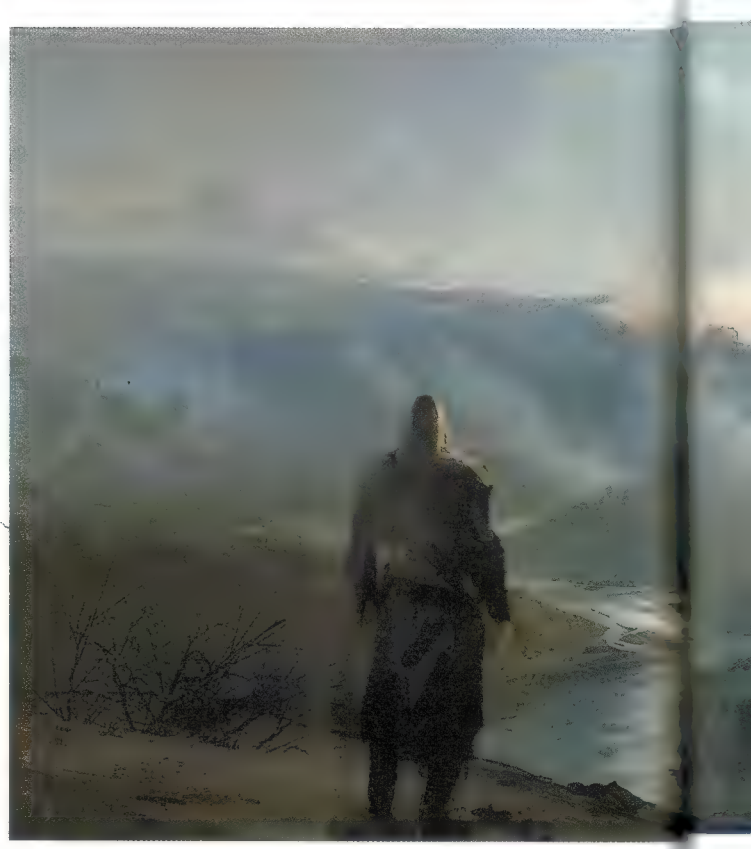
CAPPADOCIA

Cappadocia's history can be traced to the late Bronze Age, when it was home to the Hittite, who called the area *Hatti*. Several power shifts occurred during the region's long history, until it fell under the Ottoman Empire's purview, during the 15th century.

Located in the ancient region of Anatolia, now known as Turkey, the country contained several major underground cities and villages, potentially numbering in the hundreds. Trees suitable for use in the construction of buildings were scarce in the region, forcing the inhabitants to rely on other means to obtain shelter. These underground areas built in soft volcanic rock were originally created as refuges by the first inhabitants of the region, and eventually used as hiding places of Christians fleeing Roman persecution.

These cities were built to withstand attacks, with each room easily closed off from the other with stone doors which could be rolled into place to block off invaders. Ventilation shafts guaranteed a steady source of air, deep wells provided water and many amenities such as wine presses, baths, cooking areas, food pantries, livestock pens and even temples were carved out of the rock to ensure the inhabitants essential comforts, as long as necessary.

One of the hidden cities discovered in early 1512 by Ezio Auditore, was an underground haven where many poor and struggling Byzantines took refuge after the fall of Constantinople, at the hands of the Ottoman Empire. Manuel Palaiologos lived there for a time after his family lost their hold on the throne of Constantinople—perhaps this miserable lifestyle served to fuel his resolve in maintaining a subsequent life of excess, at any cost.



4
#11

BOSTON

One of the oldest cities in the United States, Boston was the theater for numerous events leading up to the American Revolution. Puritans settled in the area in 1630, making it one of the first successful British colonial settlements. It developed as an important harbor city and a center of trade between colonists and Great Britain.

During the pre-Revolutionary Era, Boston was important to both the Assassins and Templars. The Templars arrived shortly before the Seven Years War (1756 – 1763) to search for a precursor site and establish a base of operations. The Templar presence in North America reignited the war between the two groups, and influenced the climate of the city. At the time, many thugs and thieves lived in Boston, contributing to the atmosphere of lawlessness that permeated the city. By the late 1760s, the Templars had a firm hold on the city,

› BOSTON FORT

manipulating both the inhabitants and British authorities.

The resentment Bostonians felt towards Great Britain's authority blossomed into a full-blown colonial resistance movement. The Boston Massacre of 1770 was the first violent clash between civilians and British soldiers. During this confrontation, Connor arrived in the city alongside Achilles, his mentor. He soon discovered that there were major Templar threats and so it was in Boston that he saw for the first time the full reach of the Templar Order's power and influence.

Political groups like the Sons of Liberty emerged around Boston and organized activities to oppose British measures, such as the boycott of imported goods. On December 16, 1773, as a pushback against Templar smuggling enterprises, Connor, now officially a member of the Assassin Brotherhood, accompanied by Samuel Adams and others, dumped a shipment of English tea into the Boston harbor.

Although, Connor intended to disrupt Templar smuggling plans, he inadvertently wound up helping spark the American Revolution. This incident became known as the Boston Tea Party, and was one of the first symbolic gestures to reject British rule and call for colonial solidarity.

Boston and its surrounding area also hosted the first military confrontations between the British Regulars and colonial citizens. In April 1775, the Battles of Lexington and Concord officially launched the military operations of the Revolutionary War. The Battle of Bunker Hill also occurred near Boston and changed the nature of the confrontation between the Assassins and Templars. In Bunker Hill, Connor assassinated British Major John Pitcairn, thus delivering a severe blow to Templar reach in the region.

4
#12

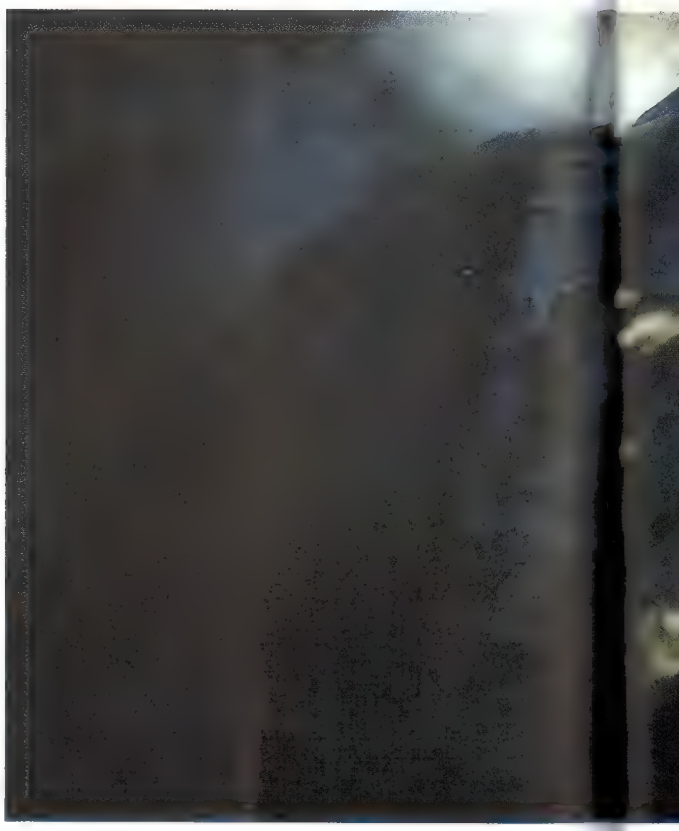
THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

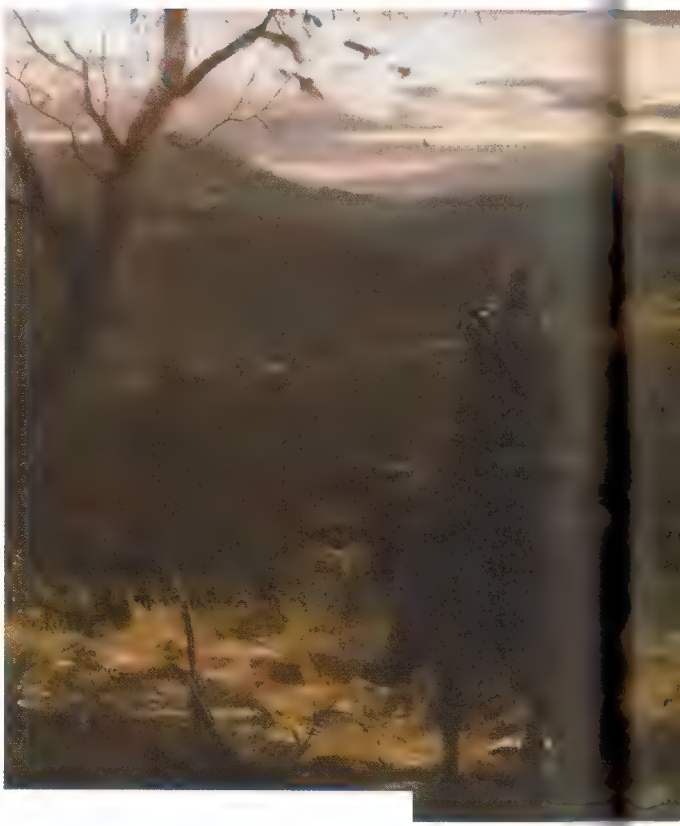
The frontier is remembered as one of the key foundations that led to the creation of the United States of America. It was the site of clashes – many of them violent – between Indigenous Peoples, British colonists, and the French and British authorities.

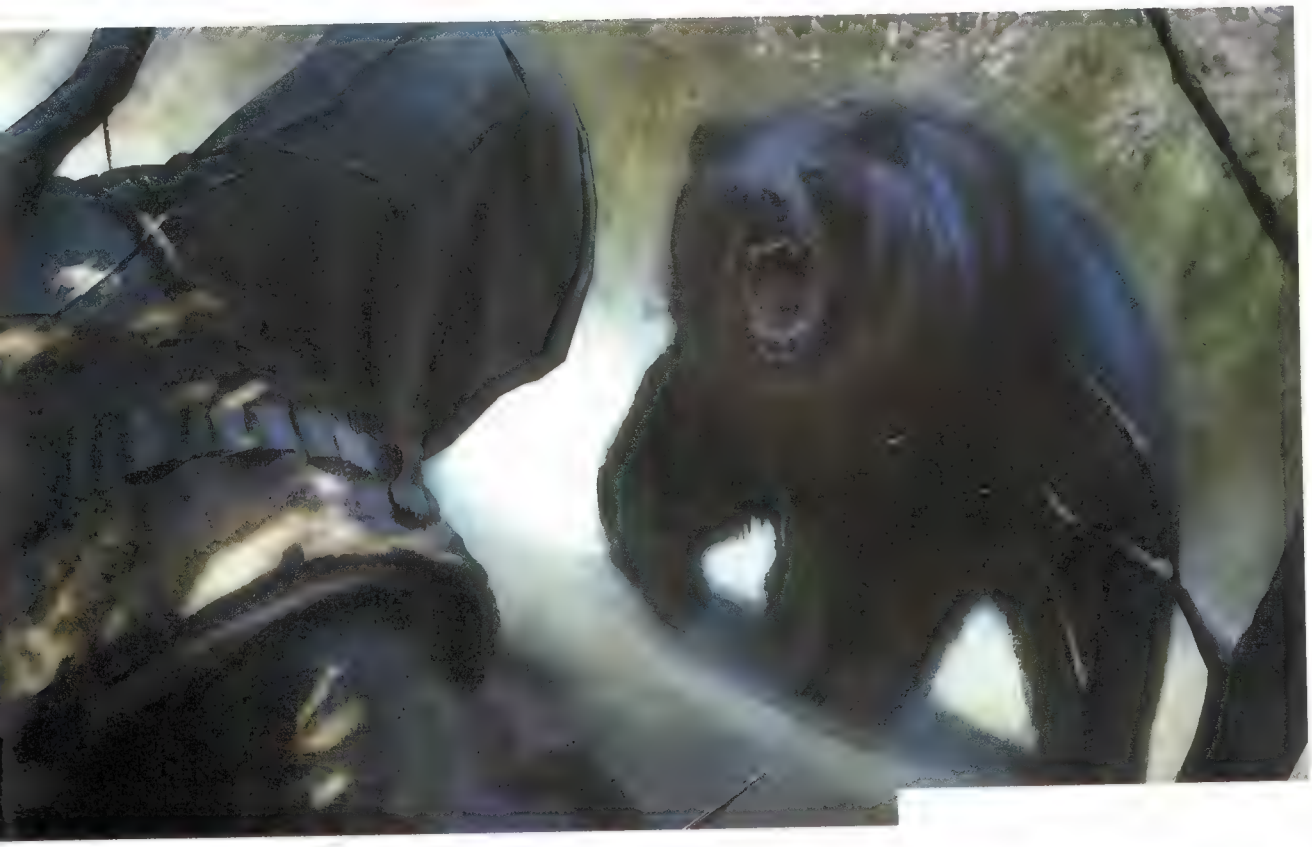
The frontier was a dynamic intersection where European colonialism met the particularities of the local geography and resources. The colonial structure of British America clashed with the American territorial wilderness and the Indigenous Peoples residing on the territory. Thus, as the colonists imposed themselves upon the environment and its people, the characters and composition of the American frontier forced itself on colonial structures, creating a particular set of traits that would define the social, political, economic and military characteristics of British colonial America.

The Assassins and Templars also needed to adapt to this dynamic environment. Between the mid-eighteenth century and the beginning of the American Revolution, the Templars sought contact with indigenous populations in order to locate a First Civilization Temple. Haytham Kenway was the Templar in charge and his search led him into the heart of the American frontier, where a *Kanien'kehá:ka* woman named Kaniehtí:io helped him. Their relationship, which culminated with the conception of a child, illustrated this collision of European and Indigenous cultures on the frontier.

By the mid-eighteenth century, British territory had become too small, and the colonists began to push west of the thirteen colonies. This resulted in several clashes between British colonists, French colonists, and Native Americans.







During the Seven Years War, British officials ordered the eradication of several indigenous villages in order to gain territory for the colonists. The half-native Assassin, Connor, discovered much later in his life that George Washington had ordered the raid that destroyed his home village. During the same period, the Templar William Johnson also negotiated with Native leaders to buy their lands, though he was willing to use force to conquer them. For Johnson, colonial settlers meant a more lucrative financial potential than trading with the Native populations. More importantly, control of the frontier would also ensure Templar dominance of the area.

As the colonists pushed into the frontier, their economic independence grew, as did their desire to detach themselves from British authority and taxes. The frontier represented an ideal: a place where colonists could settle and govern their own lives away from any established political, religious, and economic structure. Pioneers like Daniel Boone championed the notion of moving away from British influence and control.

Expansionism on the frontier, thus, meant moving away from European control and developing of a sense of "Americanness". The motivations of colonists competing for the westward lands were not purely financial or territorial, but also ideological. For the expansionists, the frontier embodied the soul of American self-reliance, self-defence, and freedom from authority, where men and women gained significant political rights. With no British authority on the frontier, colonists sought to redesign the territory under their own principles, to create a social structure that reflected their own lifestyle, which was becoming less European and more American.

However, this pursuit of independence and freedom was done at the expense of those who had called these lands homes for thousands of years. Moreover, as Connor later realized, freedom and independence would only be available to select members of the society. For Connor, expansionism on the frontier was filled with contradictory elements.

The expansion into the interior opened up new opportunities for the Templars to shape and control the American territory, and thus the nation's future. The Templars were searching to create a new world order based upon their worldviews. The frontier represented a fertile ground for the Templars to grow their would-be Empire. The Assassins, on the other hand, wanted to ensure that *all people* would become free to live according to their own values, and thus they fought against tyranny and oppression.

It was the concept of new opportunities on the frontier that raised the stakes in the war between the Assassins and Templars during the Revolutionary War. Each side striving to bring about a new society that would have lasting consequences on the world at large. The Revolutionary period then represented a window of opportunity for the Assassins and Templars, who intended to change the state of uncertainty into their favor.

4
#13

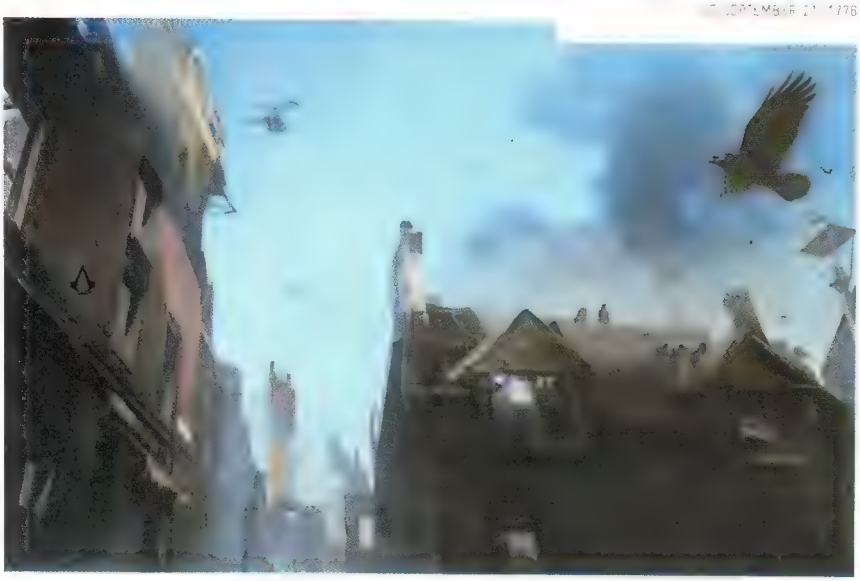
NEW YORK

The Templars believed that the area around upstate New York contained a storehouse built by Those Who Came Before. Their arrival in 1754 eventually led to clashes between their Order and the Assassin Brotherhood. The Lenape and the *Kanien'kehá:ka* peoples inhabited the land before European settlers arrived in the 1620s. The area, which is now New York City, was called New Amsterdam, having originally been established as a Dutch fur trading post. In 1664, Great Britain conquered it and renamed it New York, and by 1700, only around 200 Lenape people remained in the city.

Decades later, New York City was the place where the first organized colonial resistance to British laws occurred. The Stamp Act Congress took place in New York in 1765, and was designed to oppose various taxes imposed by the British Parliament on the colonies.

New York also served as the arena for several battles of the Revolutionary War. On August 27, 1776, the Patriots suffered a major defeat in the Battle of Long Island, also known as the Battle of Brooklyn. After other successful campaigns against George Washington's forces, British troops eventually occupied Manhattan Island and forced the Continental Army out of the city.

> NEW YORK AFTER THE GREAT ... OF NIGHT SEPTEMBER 21, 1776



Several fires also broke out in New York during the war. The fire of September 21, 1776, greatly damaged the city. Despite the fires, New York still played an important role throughout the Revolutionary conflict.

The city was a key target for the Loyalists. After interrogating Redcoat soldiers in Fort George, New York, Connor and the Templar Haytham Kenway learned that the Loyalists were planning to abandon Philadelphia in the summer of 1778, intending to focus their efforts on New York in order to secure their control of the region. On June 28, 1778, colonial forces intercepted British troops on their way to New York and engaged them at the Battle of Monmouth, New Jersey. Far from shifting the balance of power, Great Britain was eventually able to retain control of the city until the end of the confrontations in 1783, as they controlled the harbor, and consequently could supply their forces positioned across North America.

> BROADWAY STREET

4
#14

PHILADELPHIA

Located in the Delaware Valley, the city of Philadelphia played an important role during the American Revolutionary period. Originally inhabited by Lenni-Lenape populations, the first European claims on this part of the Delaware River were Dutch and Swedish. Great Britain took over the area in the 1660s, and in 1681, gave a charter to the Quaker William Penn.

Philadelphia was then built according to an urban plan, and quickly became an important colonial city. In the early 1770s, during the early confrontations between colonials and British forces, Philadelphia became the place where colonial unity and American independence were debated and forged.

The rising tensions between the colonists and the British forced the colonies to take a formal stand against England. Due to its strategic location, and the importance of the Quaker support, Philadelphia was chosen to host a reunion of representatives from each colony. On September 5, 1774, the delegates met at Carpenter's Hall for the First Continental Congress. From that day forth, Philadelphia became the heart of colonial decision-making.

On June 16, 1775, at the Pennsylvania State House in Philadelphia, George Washington was named Commander-in-Chief of the newly created Continental Army. This did not please the Templars, who were trying to appoint their agent Charles Lee. Other decisions that took place in the city contributed to the formation of colonial unity. The Second Continental Congress was a critical step towards the separation from Great Britain. On July 4, 1776, the Congress adopted the resolutions that formed the Declaration of Independence.

Philadelphia was also the location of several battles between the Continental Army and British forces. General Howe, who desired to gain control of the city because of its symbolic importance to the colonists, led the British. After the Patriots' defeat at the Battle of Brandywine, southwest of Philadelphia, the colonists were forced back towards the city. As the British advanced on Philadelphia, they encountered little opposition from Washington's forces. On September 26, 1777, General Howe entered and occupied Philadelphia, forcing Congress to abandon the city. However, on June 18, 1778, the British evacuated Philadelphia in order to concentrate their troops in New York, where they feared an attack from the joint Franco-American forces.

Following the end of the military engagements, Philadelphia continued to act as a center of revolutionary debates and decisions. The Constitutional Convention of 1787 took place between May 14 and September 17, and resulted in the adoption of the Constitution of the United States of America, which became the supreme law of the new nation. Philadelphia's importance in the early period of the United States can also be attributed to the fact that it served as the nation's capital between 1790 and 1800.

> WILLIAM PENN DESIGNED THE CITY ACCORDING TO A REGULAR STREET GRID DIVIDED INTO FOUR QUADRANTS, EACH QUADRANT CONTAINING A PARK AND GREEN SPACES

365

4
#15

NEW ORLEANS

Prior to the arrival of French explorers and traders in the 1690s, indigenous populations inhabited the area that would later become New Orleans. In 1718, the Company of the West officially founded the city of *Nouvelle-Orléans*. It was immediately considered an important strategic location and part of a critical trade route that linked the Mississippi River with the Gulf of Mexico.

New Orleans quickly became a major economic, political, and cultural center. Both the Assassins and the Templars realized the region's importance. The Templars plotted with local government officials and became involved in trade to secure their hold on the territory.

During the 1760s, New Orleans went through great turmoil. The city remained under French rule until 1765, when Louisiana's ownership was officially transferred to Spain. In 1766, Spanish governor Antonio de Ulloa arrived in the city, but his authority met with severe opposition from the French Creole residents. He was later forced to leave during the Louisiana Rebellion of 1768. A new Spanish governor was appointed soon afterwards, promptly reasserting control over the city.

The Templars used this changeover to gain access to the highest levels of government and extend their operations. It later transpired that Spanish officials were participating in a secret Templar slave trafficking enterprise, transferring slaves from New Orleans to Mexico in search of what they believed to be a First Civilization Prophecy Disk.

In the decades that followed, several devastating fires ravaged parts of the city, destroying many of the French colonial buildings. Most of the architecture that remains in what is now referred to as the French quarter was actually built by the Spanish.

Although Spanish rule ended in 1801, when the city was handed back to the French, Spain had left an important mark on New Orleans, contributing considerably to its expansion. However, the city did not remain under French control for very long. In 1803, Napoleon Bonaparte sold the territory of Louisiana to the United States of America in a transaction orchestrated by US President Thomas Jefferson.

› NEW ORLEANS MARKET

> KUKULCÁN PYRAMID IN CHICHÉN ITZÁ

> INS DE [illegible] SAVRAD CENOTE

4
#16

CHICHÉN ITZÁ

Located in the Yucatan Peninsula, Chichén Itzá was one of the most powerful cities of the Mayan civilization. Several structures have survived throughout the ages, offering crucial information about the complexity and particularities of Mayan architecture, society, culture, and political organization.

In the 1760s, the Templars discovered that artifacts from the First Civilization were to be found in the caves and cenotes near Chichén Itzá. They began to explore the region, searching for a Prophecy Disk that would help them gather information about both the past and future of the human race. By manipulating the local New Orleans government, the Templar Order had slaves and vagrants sent from Louisiana down to Chichén Itzá in order to excavate fragments of the Prophecy Disk.

After learning of the slave transfer operations to Chichén Itzá, the Assassin Aveline de Grandpré made her way south to the Mayan ruins and First Civilization chambers, where she discovered the extent of the Templar operations.

NOTHING IS TRUE EVERYTHING IS PERMITTED

CARTES BLANCHES

LIST OF ARTISTS:

- TAV
- C[illegible]EWART
- ANDROID JONES
- GABZ
- WILL MURA
- [illegible]

> ANDROID JONES

WAR DIMS HOPES FOR PEACE
Police Rule Out Homicide To 'Lack Of Evidence'
Political Commer Never Made It Tc Airport'
Signs Point To Police Corruption
DAILY MIRROR
MILLENIUM BUG MADNESS
Police Commissioner Denies Existance of 'Hooded Vigilante'
Terrorist Activity
Election Creates Unlikely Alliance
WAR ON CRIME
MAN SETS HIMSELF O FIRE
But At What Cost?
CLIMATE FE FOUL PLAY
WE DID IT!
Gang Violence At 'Fever Pitch'
The Ultimate Sacrifice?
DA VINCI EXHIBITION
New Suspect In Assassination Conspiracy
Handsome Killer' Wins Sympathy From Jury
WITNESS COMES FORWARD
Crowded Subway
Civil In Po
BRAINS
A.T.M
HOMAG
Coca-Cola

ENCYCLOPEDIA CREDITS

PRODUCER: JULIEN CUNY
EDITORS AND ADDITIONAL WRITING: RICHARD FARRESE / ANN LEMAY
WRITERS: FRANÇOIS DANSEREAU / IVAN LOWE / JAMES NADIGER / NITAI PODAR / MEGAN SUTTON / JONATHAN WHELTON-PANE / WILLIAM WRIGHT
ART DIRECTOR: ALEXANDRE DE LAMBERTERIE
DESIGNER: ÉLISE MORBIDELLI
PROJECT MANAGER: ANOUK BACHMAN

UBIWORKSHOP
TRANSMEDIA PRODUCER: LOUIS-PIERRE PHARAND
TRANSMEDIA PRODUCT MANAGER: CHRISTOPHE GRANDJEAN
TRANSMEDIA PRODUCTION COORDINATORS: JEROME LECLERC-COUTURE / ISABELLE LEGAULT
DESIGNERS: STEFAN KOZIOL / JULIA HEDRICH
VOLT

VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO:
ETIENNE ALLONIER / BRENT ASHE / STÉPHANE BLAIS / ANOUK BACHMAN / MOHAMED GAMBOUZ / THOMAS GEFFROYD / JEAN GUESDON / RAPHAEL LACOSTE / COREY MAY / DARBY MCDEVITT / FRANCOIS PELLAND / MATJAZ PUHAR / MATT TURNER / JEFFREY YOHALEM

SPECIAL THANKS TO:
FRANÇOIS-XAVIER DÉNIÈLE / GABE GRAZIANI / DAMIEN NEYMARC / DAVID RANCOURT / CAROLINE SRUN / DAN TEMEME / UBIK / NICOLAS LEFEBVRE / JULIE QUACH / HINDE DAOUI / ANNE RUBIO-FUERTES / DOUBLE-ECHO / ALL THE LOCALIZATIONS TEAMS / THE CHINH NGO / TODOR TODOROV

ORIGINAL DESIGN & LAYOUT BY DOUBLE-ECHO:
ALEXANDRE DE LAMBERTERIE / ÉLOISE CAMIRE / MARIE LEVIEL
ÉLISE MORBIDELLI

UBISOFT LOCALIZATION TEAM
LOCALIZATION PROJECT MANAGER: GAELLE LEYSOUR
LOCALIZATION TECHNICAL SPECIALIST: HUGO SÉNÉCAL-RENÉ
LOCALIZATION CONSULTANT: SANDRA POURMARIN

PROOF-READING
ENZYME TESTING LABS: MICHAEL ALKIRE / CHRISTOPHER BELL / IAN DIXON / REMY JULITA / ANDREAS KANNEGIESSER / CAROLLJO MAHER
ENGLISH PROOF-READING: RICHARD FARRESE / SERGE LOUNAK / GUY PARKER

HISTORY IS OUR PLAYGROUND—FOR EIGHT YEARS NOW, WE HAVE HAD THE HONOR OF EXPLORING THE PAST WITH YOU, THE PLAYERS. IT HAS BEEN AN AMAZING ADVENTURE, ONE WHICH HAS INSPIRED US TO CONTINUALLY EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE WORLD OF ASSASSIN'S CREED WITH EVERY STEP WE TAKE.

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE TEAMS AND PEOPLE WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE CREATION OF THIS UNIQUE UNIVERSE, WITH GREAT TALENT AND CREATIVITY.

INSIEME PER LA VITTORIA!

SEBASTIEN PUEL

ENCYCLOPEDIA CONTENT CREDITS (ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: SEBASTIEN PUEL / JADE RAYMOND / YANNIS MALLAT

HEAD OF CONTENT: STÉPHANE BLAIS / JULIEN CUNY / JEAN GUESDON

CREATIVE DIRECTORS: ALEXANDRE AMANCIO / PATRICE DÉSILETS / ALEXANDER HUTCHINSON

WRITERS: OLIVER BOWDEN / PATRICE DÉSILETS / RICHARD FARRESE / NICHOLAS GRIMWOOD / KARL KERSCHL / COREY MAY / DARBY MCDEVITT / JILL MURRAY / ETHAN PETTY / WILLIAM RAYMOND / JOSHUA RUBIN / YVES SIMONEAU / CAMERON STEWART / MATT TURNER / MICHAEL WENDSCHUH / JEFFREY YOHALEM / CERI YOUNG

ART DIRECTORS: MOHAMED GAMBOUZ / MATHIEU GRANJON / RAPHAËL LACOSTE / THE CHINH NGO

ILLUSTRATORS: DAVID ALVAREZ / GILLES BELOEIL / EDDIE BENNUN / ANAIS BERNABÉ / PIERRE BERTIN / NICOLAS BOUVIER / YANNICK CORBOZ / VINCENT DEROZIER / MARTIN DESCHAMBAULT / PATRICK DESGRENIERS / MAXIME DESMETTRE / THIERRY DOIZON / NICOLAS DROLET / RÉMI FARJAUD / NICOLAS FERRAND / VINCENT GAIGNEUX / VINCENT GAUTHIER / JOHAN GRENIER / GRANT HILLIER / DIANA KALUGINA / KARL KERSCHL / KONSTANTIN KOSTADINOV / RAPHAEL LACOSTE / PATRICK LAMBERT / DAVID LEVY / OLIVIER MARTIN / GUILLAUME MENUEL / BORISLAV MITKOV / CRAIG MULLINS / KAI NGUYEN / TRI NGUYEN / NAMWOO NOH / NIC OROC / BENOIT PELCHAT / MAX QIN / LUDOVIC RIBARDIÈRE / ANTOINE ROL / JEFF SIMPSON / CAMERON STEWART / NICK TAN CHEE ENG / NADINE THOMAS / REMKO TROOST / STEPHANE TURGEON / WILLIAM WU / NACHO YAGÜE / DONGLU YU / GUANG YU TAN

© 2012 Ubisoft Entertainment.
All Rights Reserved. Assassin's Creed, Ubisoft and the Ubisoft logo are trademarks of Ubisoft Entertainment in the U.S. and/or other countries.

PRINTED IN CANADA BY TRANSCONTINENTAL INTERGLOBE.

NOTHING
IS
TRUE.

EVERYTHING
IS
PERMITTED.

UBISOFT